



# THE INDEPENDENT

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## Robinson censured by MPs for failing to register offshore trust



Mr Robinson with his wife, Marie Giorgia. Sir Gordon Downey said there was no reason for her not to receive payments from the fund

Photograph: John Voss

**Geoffrey Robinson, the Paymaster-General, was last night censured by MPs for failing to disclose his interest in a £12.75m Guernsey-based trust. On the eve of a Commons debate on tax avoidance and offshore trusts, Anthony Bevins, Political Editor, says the Tories are demanding the Paymaster-General's resignation.**

The Commons Committee on Standards and Privileges found Mr Robinson not guilty of breaching the rules of the Commons - because there is no clear-cut rule on registration of an interest in a trust.

But it pointed out that when an MP has doubts, as Mr Robinson had, because he sought the advice of a QC and accountants, he would do better to seek the expert advice of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards, Sir Gordon Downey. Sir Gordon told the committee the interest would have been better registered, and added: "This would have been my recommendation had my advice been sought."

Peter Lilley, shadow chancellor, who lodged the complaint, said: "This is a further embarrassment for Mr Robinson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister. His position is untenable and he should go, or be moved." David Heathcoat-Amory, the Conservative front-bench treasury spokesman, said Mr Robinson had been charged

with hypocrisy, conflict of interest, and for being economical with the truth. "The fact that he is guilty of the second and third charges requires him to resign."

Last night, with the Prime Minister away in The Hague, there was no guidance from No 10 as to what should be done with Mr Robinson, counted as one of Tony Blair's friends. That Mr Lilley leaves open the option of Mr Robinson being shifted to another department could give the Prime Minister a face-saving get-out.

The report showed indications of politically motivated damage-limitation. There was no notice the report was coming: it was delivered at 6pm, making it difficult for newspapers to digest a complex document in time for first editions. It was made more difficult

in that its initial conclusion stated: "There is no case for saying that Mr Robinson breached the rules of the House." There followed an ambiguous paragraph saying: "Although not a requirement, there are occasions when interests of this nature would be better registered, and if a doubt should arise Members ought to seek the advice of the Commissioner."

"We and our predecessors have made this point on several previous occasions. If a Member feels it necessary to seek professional advice on a matter of registration, it is clear that some doubt must exist."

Only from close reading of the small print does it emerge that Mr Robinson twice sought advice about possible registration of the Orion family trust, established in January 1996. His accountants and

Michael B-Joff, a leading counsel, said no specific disclosure of the trust was required in the Commons Register of Members' Interests. Sir Gordon said in his report to the committee: "It was ... a mistake for Mr Robinson to rely on advice of registration matters from his professional advisers."

As for the rules, Sir Gordon said: "The guide does not pretend to cover all contingencies and the circumstances surrounding the (Guernsey-based) Orion Trust have not arisen before."

Bob Sheldon, the former Labour minister who chairs the committee, said: "It is very difficult to lay down rules for trusts."

But the commissioner advised the committee that while Mr Robinson had no right to receive a pecuniary or other material benefit from the trust, "Mr Robinson's hope of future distributions might reasonably be regarded as an expectation and, measured against the underlying intentions of the rules, this could be regarded as a pecuniary interest or other material benefit."

He added that while a suspension of payments applied to Mr Robinson, as a minister, it did not apply to his wife.

"In these circumstances," he said, "it can be argued that even without knowledge of the underlying shareholdings, the existence of the trust itself might reasonably be thought by others to be a source of potential influence. This is not just because Mr Robinson is a treasury minister: the same could be said of any Member who may wish to participate in proceedings in Parliament affecting the position of overseas trusts."

### TODAY'S NEWS

#### Senior Tories knew of funding deal

The Conservative Party faced further embarrassing revelations yesterday surrounding the £1m donation it accepted from a heroin-smuggling fugitive. Following The Independent's disclosure yesterday of the payment from Ma Sik-chun, fresh claims emerged that three senior Tories knew the donation was conditional upon him being allowed to travel to his Hong Kong home from exile in Taiwan. Page 3

#### Reforms herald

#### pre-nuptial 'bliss'

The Lord Chancellor's department is considering changes to Britain's divorce laws, making pre-nuptial agreements legally enforceable. It would bring us into line with the US, Canada, Australia and most of the EU. It is also suggested those without an agreement would be forced to divide marital property 50:50 on divorce. The idea is thought to have the backing of a government task force. Page 3

#### Memorial charges

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund said that in future all professional services would be put out to tender and charges to the fund would be reviewed. The decision came days after the public disclosure that solicitors Mishcon de Reya had sent a £500,000 bill for legal services to the fund. Page 6

#### Algeria spurns

#### EU mediation

The EU's first attempt at mediation in Algeria has backfired, in even worse fashion than its earlier doomed involvement in Yugoslavia. Algeria yesterday flatly refused European requests for a visit by a United Nations rapporteur on human rights. And ministers were refused permission to visit the site of a notorious recent massacre less than 20 miles from Algiers, where it would have been possible to hear survivors' accounts first-hand. Page 7

#### Poet in motion

The BBC unveiled its first poet-in-residence in the shape of John Agard, 49, an extrovert and politicised versifier, who has published best-selling anthologies for adults and children. He wants poetry spread throughout the corporation and its programmes - even in cooking and gardening shows. Page 5

## End in sight for the World Wide Wait

Relief may be at hand for users of the Internet who find that navigating cyberspace feels less like surfing and more like endlessly treading water, reports David Usborne in New York

A consortium of high technology companies in the United States is expected shortly to unveil plans for a new super-fast modem that will deliver Internet content at up to 30 times the speed available from any modem now on the market.

Developed jointly by Microsoft, Intel and Compaq, the three Leviathans of the American computer industry, the new modems could be on shelves in the US in time for next Christmas.

If successfully marketed, the modems could revolutionise cyberspace. They promise to end the frustration suffered by millions of Internet customers who sometimes wait minutes for pages from the World Wide Web to land on their screens. With these

modems, they would materialise almost instantly.

Details of the project are expected to be unveiled at a telecommunications conference in Washington next week. The *New York Times* reported yesterday.

Closely involved with the computer companies are most of America's regional telephone companies who have cooperated in setting common technological standards for the new equipment.

The modems would feed data via traditional telephone lines. They would remain plugged into the Internet at all times without users actually having to dial up a connection. Users would even be able to use their telephone for voice transmission simultaneously.

Recently, the industry has been switching focus to television

cable as the best means of delivering data in the future at speeds acceptable to consumers. But speculation that access via television set-top boxes would supplant telephone connections may be reversed by next week's announcement.

Characteristically, Microsoft seems to be successfully positioning itself to ensure dominance regardless of whether telephone or cable television comes out on top.

While pursuing the new phone modem with its partners, Bill Gates has made significant investments in the television cable industry, buying a stake in Comcast, one of America's largest cable distributors, and buying WebTV, which makes set-top boxes capable of delivering data and television programming.

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## COLUMN ONE

### MPs try to hedge against an unsociable fast mover

It is growing insidiously, causing darkness, depression, and despair. Its victims regard it as public enemy number one, and, so far, they have been defenceless against its march through the suburbs of England. Leylandii, the fastest-growing hedge in the West, has caused neighbours to engage in war, and now a group of Labour MPs are seeking a solution.

Backbench MP Lynne Jones is taking up cudgels against the monster hybrid from America on behalf of home-owners who feel their lives have been ruined by it. She is leading a campaign for the Home Office to allow an amendment to the Crime and Disorder Bill to outlaw hedges that have become a nuisance to those who have to live in their shadow. It follows the saga of one of her constituents, Michael Jones, of Tillyard Croft, in Selly Oak, who spent £100,000 in legal fees fighting the Leylandii at the bottom of his garden. His was the most expensive case of its kind in British legal history, and he won the right to have the hedge cut down to size after it had soared to around 30ft in height. His neighbour had to pay the costs, but Mr Jones risked losing his house if he had lost.

More than two hundred fellow sufferers have contacted him seeking a remedy, and Mr Jones has formed the HedgeLine to offer help. "Leylandii are terrible in different ways...



Eagle: sympathetic to those put in shade by the hedge menace

...one is winter gloom, because they have no relief from its shadow; Leylandii takes away the sky, and that is the most depressing in summer time. They drain away moisture from the garden, so you are left with a mono-culture... But there are other problems, with roots and house subsidence."

Leylandii were introduced from America at the turn of the century from hybrid conifers; they are propagated by cuttings and can grow four feet in a year. Sufferers from Leylandii oppression sometimes show symptoms of a fixation about the hedge in their neighbour's garden, which tends to take over their lives.

But remedies are difficult to find. Planning laws against hedges are unclear. Mr Jones fought and won, but his neighbour has planted another hedge inside the cut-down Leylandii which is growing steadily. In Britain, where the home is the castle, there is no universal way of controlling growth of a neighbour's hedge.

Ms Jones and a group of Labour MPs with similar constituency problems, including Dale Campbell Savours and Chris Mullin, lobbied Angela Eagle, the environment minister, for action. She was sympathetic and one possibility that emerged would be to include it in the Crime and Disorder Bill, which seeks to tackle anti-social behaviour. Campaigners against Leylandii argued that neighbours who planted Leylandii and allowed them to grow uncontrollably were guilty of anti-social behaviour and should be outlawed by the Bill. The Bill has started its passage through Parliament in the Lords and will be debated in the Commons in spring.

But the Home Office rejected the idea on grounds that the Bill would become unwieldy. "There was no scope in the Crime and Disorder Bill to include an amendment," said a Home Office spokesman. But the MPs are determined to press on and are considering tabling their own amendment to the Bill. The Department of Environment is consulting local authorities on action it should take to stop the march of the giant invader.

— Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent

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## PEOPLE



Queen of chat: Millions of Americans hang on Oprah Winfrey's every word

### Oprah prepares for her cowboy showdown

Oprah Winfrey, America's formidable talk-show queen, prepared yesterday for a showdown in court with Texas cattlemen who claim an off-hand remark she made on air about mad cow disease sent the Atlantic.

Jury selection began yesterday in Amarillo, Texas, where Ms Winfrey is expected to testify in court next week. The cattlemen, who are seeking damages to compensate their claimed losses, will rest much of their evidence on the fact that after Ms Winfrey swore off hamburgers during a programme on BSE in April 1996, the value of beef futures on the Chicago exchange fell by one and a half cents. Ms Winfrey's lawyers are expected to testify that the two events were unrelated and that, besides, their client has a right to exercise her right to free speech unhampered by ranchers, meat processors or anyone else.

The very fact that the case is being heard at all testifies to the extraordinary power Ms Winfrey enjoys to influence American opinion. Whether her ac-

cusers have any chance of winning the case or whether they will regret having brought it to court at all, drawing unnecessary attention as it does to a bovine problem that has so far seemingly failed to cross the Atlantic, remains to be seen.

What is clear for all to see, however, is that Ms Winfrey's impact on other commercial spheres is enormous. Dubbed "the most powerful woman in America" by *Life* magazine last year, she has demonstrated time and again that a word of recommendation from her, or even the merest suggestion of approval, can have a mighty beneficial impact on sales of books, records, films and women's clothes.

Her word is gold, in part, because no one can accuse her of having a financial stake in the products she endorses. Worth \$414m (£257m), according to *Fortune* magazine, she is the world's highest-paid entertainer.

— John Corlin, Washington

### Sean, 12, is the youngest father

Sean Stewart became the youngest father in Britain yesterday when his girlfriend gave birth to a healthy son.

Sean, 12, last month, was allowed to miss school to be at the bedside of his 16-year-old girlfriend, Emma Webster, her parents, Ray and Shirley, and Sean's mother, Theresa. The pair, who are neighbours at Sharnbrook, Bedfordshire, were 11 and 15 when Emma became pregnant. Sean and his mother moved next door to the Websters in November 1996 and he became Emma's boyfriend shortly after that. He is a 7th year at Margaret Beaufort School in the nearby village of Risley. Emma is studying for her GCSEs — including one in child care — at Sharnbrook Upper School.



Sean Stewart: Shocked at first

Last summer, Sean said he would stand by Emma and be there for the baby. "I was shocked at first when I was told Emma was pregnant but I am all right about it now," Emma said she thought Sean had told her he was the same age as she was when they started going out.

— John Lichfield, Paris

### Bardot guilty of race hate

Brigitte Bardot was convicted yesterday of "provoking racial hatred" for claiming Muslims would, one day, cut the throat of everyone in France. The former actress, 63, convicted of a similar offence last year, was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay for publishing the judgment in three French newspapers.

Bardot, an animal activist, has campaigned for years against the observance in France of Islamic festivals which require ritual throat-cutting of sheep and goats but her comments have become political, making a connection between ritual sheep-killing and the seemingly random murders committed by Islamic fundamentalist terror groups in Algeria. She is married to a former official of the far-right National Front.

— John Lichfield, Paris

## UPDATE

### TRANSPORT

#### Motorists prefer jams to buses

Congestion is costing car drivers £10bn a year and most motorists would rather sit in the jams than switch to public transport, says a major report out yesterday.

Shopping adds £500m to the congestion bill, school trips run up £600m and commuting costs top £1bn. A regular commuter loses, on average, 35 minutes extra in a car because of traffic jams.

Only 7 per cent of those who use their car to commute would use public transport instead — even if congestion doubled their journey time, according to the report by *Loc*, the country's largest car franchiser.

It appears that a stick is more effective than a carrot. Only 25 per cent of drivers would use a car if traffic-related pollution became a serious health hazard.

The most strongly supported option among motorists for reducing congestion would be investment in buses and trains and subsidies for public transport, the report found.

Banning cars from city centres, investment in bus lanes and investment in motorways and trunk roads were the next most favoured options.

— Randeep Ramesh, Transport Correspondent

### RURAL LIVING

#### Elderly suffer in the countryside

Elderly people living in the countryside can expect less homecare, fewer residential places and less help with their travel costs than their urban counterparts. The message of a research report by the Rural Development Commission, a government agency, is "Don't be left in the countryside."

Largely because of the way resources are allocated, councils in urban areas are able to offer many more hours of homecare than those in rural areas. At its most extreme, in 1995 Lincolnshire provided only 25 per cent of the number of hours service per 1,000 people aged 75 or over of that provided by Manchester and Westminster. The report also found rural councils spent half as much on adult education per head as inner London boroughs.

### SAFETY

#### Smoke alarm battery warning

The removal of batteries from smoke alarms or failing to replace old ones is partly to blame for a rise in the number of people being killed and injured in fires.

Provisional figures reveal the number of fire deaths in the United Kingdom has risen from 747 in 1995 to 801 in 1996 — a seven per cent increase. Since 1994 the number has risen by about 15 per cent after a decline in the previous years. The report notes that although smoke alarms continue to be effective there was a sharp increase in the number of machines that failed to go off. In nearly half the cases it was due to the batteries having been removed. This could be because the owner had become fed up with the noise made during false alarms, or because they were dead.

— Jason Bennett, Crime Correspondent

### TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.38	Italy (lira)	2,883
Austria (schillings)	20.49	Japan (yen)	209.26
Belgium (francs)	60.25	Malta (lira)	0.63
Canada (\$)	2.29	Netherlands (guilder)	3.28
Cyprus (pounds)	0.85	Norway (kroner)	12.11
Denmark (kroner)	11.18	Portugal (escudos)	295.80
France (francs)	9.76	Spain (pesetas)	246.77
Germany (marks)	2.92	Sweden (kroner)	12.11
Greece (drachme)	462.69	Switzerland (francs)	2.38
Hong Kong (\$)	12.27	Turkey (lira)	341.98
Ireland (pounds)	1.15	USA (\$)	1.59

Source: Thomas Cook

Rates for indication purposes only

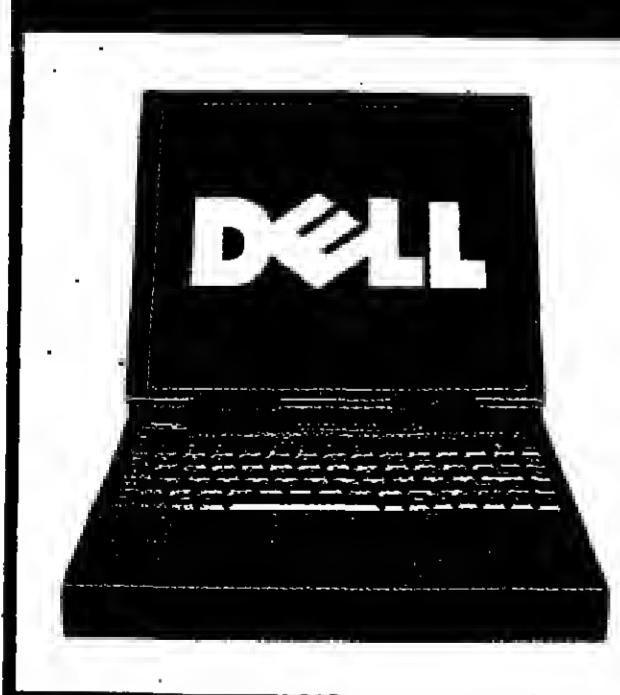
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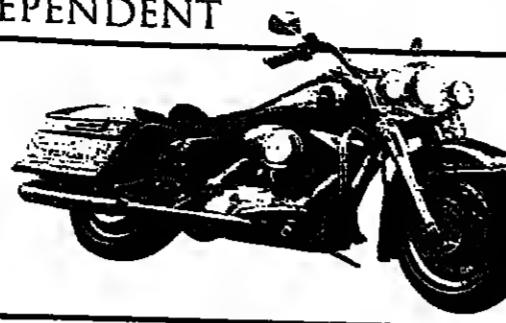
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**What's it worth? Young artists put value of work to test**



Stephen Chambers' oil painting *Red Noise* is one of the works by young British artists featured in Art 98, the London Contemporary Art Fair, which opens at the Business Design

Centre in Islington, north London, today. The exhibition also provides the first test of the new market values of the burgeoning contemporary art establishment. Many works

are commanding high prices. A Damien Hirst 'spin painting' – a circular canvas which Hirst places on a potter's wheel before depositing paint in it – is valued at £35,000

## Senior Tories 'made a deal' with Chinese heroin trafficker

The Conservative Party came under increasing pressure last night to hand back the £1m donation it accepted from a heroin smuggler. Steve Boggan and Anthony Bevins look at fresh details of an alleged deal made with the Tories.

The family of Ma Sik-chun, the heroin smuggler who gave £1m to the Tory Party, yesterday claimed that three senior Conservatives knew that the money was given in return for "certain commitments".

In a letter to the party asking for the money back, Ma's son, Ma Ching-kwan, said former treasurers Lord Hambleton and Lord Harris and the former Cabinet minister David Mellor were told the donation came with strings attached.

Mr Mellor, who was hired by the family's newspaper company as a consultant, firmly rejected the claims, while the lords declined to comment. Meanwhile, William Hague, the Tory leader, promised to return the cash if it was found to have come from an "illegal" source. The party's policy is never to accept donations with attached conditions.

In the House of Commons,

Labour MP Dennis Skinner said Ma Ching-kwan "comes from a family of recognised heroin-dealers in Hong Kong," and said the £1m should be given to charity.

"They [the Ma's] did it because they wanted the father who had escaped to Taiwan to be brought back to Hong Kong," he said. "They used the offices of David Mellor and of Chris Patten. They handed over the money in the presence of the last prime minister."

It is understood the Ma family hoped the donation might smooth the return to Hong Kong of Ma senior, 59, who has been living as a fugitive in Taiwan since 1978. He jumped bail after being accused of involvement in one of South-east Asia's biggest heroin and opium rackets.

The family sparked the latest funding row on Monday when it published details of the £1m donation in its Hong Kong-based *Oriental Daily News*. It reproduced a Conservative Party receipt – numbered A10885, dated 29.6.94 – for the donation, accompanied by a picture of Mr Ma junior, CK Ma, with John Major at a Downing Street dinner. It also claimed that the party knew the money came from Ma senior, the fugitive.

In yesterday's edition, it reproduced a letter to Sir Brian Mawhinney, then the party

chairman, dated 1 April 1997, CK Ma wrote that his family had been a "frequent and major" contributor but that he was "concerned that one of these contributions for £1,000,000 was made with certain commitments that, with a general election only a few weeks away, and with the uncertainties that the outcome ... there appears to have been no satisfactory outcome to the explicit expectations of my family..."

"Various conversations regarding my family's expectations in supporting your party at a difficult time in its history took place with Lord Hambleton, Sir Philip Harris, Rt Hon David Mellor and other senior parliamentary members of your party and there is no doubt in my mind that the expectations of my family were clearly understood by all concerned."

Mr Mellor issued a brief statement saying: "My dealings with the Oriental Press Group [the Ma family's publicly-quoted company] were entirely proper and I would strongly resent any suggestion to the contrary."

Mr Hague said he had blocked all further overseas donations when he had taken over from John Major, and he added: "We would not accept money from illegal sources. If ever that turned out not to be the case ... then of course the money in question would be returned."

## Reforms may force couples to plan their divorce before they marry

Couples will be encouraged to reach pre-nuptial agreements under controversial divorce law reforms being considered by the Government. But, Kim Sengupta discovers, such agreements already exist and judges are increasingly ready to accept them in court.

Forms of pre-nuptial agreements are not new to English common law. Wealthy families arranged settlements for wives built into marriage contracts for centuries. But all that changed in 1848 when in the case of *Cockedge v Cockedge*, judge Sir Lionel Shadwell condemned the practice for "enticing wives to engage in the most atrocious conduct". The Victorian fear was that certainty of a settlement was intrinsically destabilising to the family as it would encourage some wives to stray.

Now the Lord Chancellor's Department is considering changes to the divorce laws to bring them in line with the United States, Canada, Australia and most of the European Union and make pre-nuptial agreements legally enforceable.

There is even the proposal of a

penalty clause, with those without an agreement being forced to divide marital property 50:50 on divorce.

The proposed changes are also said to have the support of a ministerial task force on promoting the family chaired by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw. The process of taking out a pre-nuptial agreement would, it is believed, make people think seriously before taking such an important step. It would also help the Child Support Agency's efforts to make absent fathers pay contributions to their offspring. One minister is reported to have declared: "If it stops Sid Yobbo from having children, so much the better."

## WINNERS AND LOSERS



A judge in London awarded Maya Flick, wife of Mercedes-Benz heir, Mick Flick, 5.3 per cent of his £9m fortune, despite a pre-nuptial agreement entitling her to much less



The entertainer Michael Jackson, worth £500m, has a pre-nuptial agreement with his wife, Debbie Rowe, which gives her no rights to a division of his fortune



Larry Fortensky had a pre-nuptial agreement entitling him to about £1m from his marriage to Elizabeth Taylor

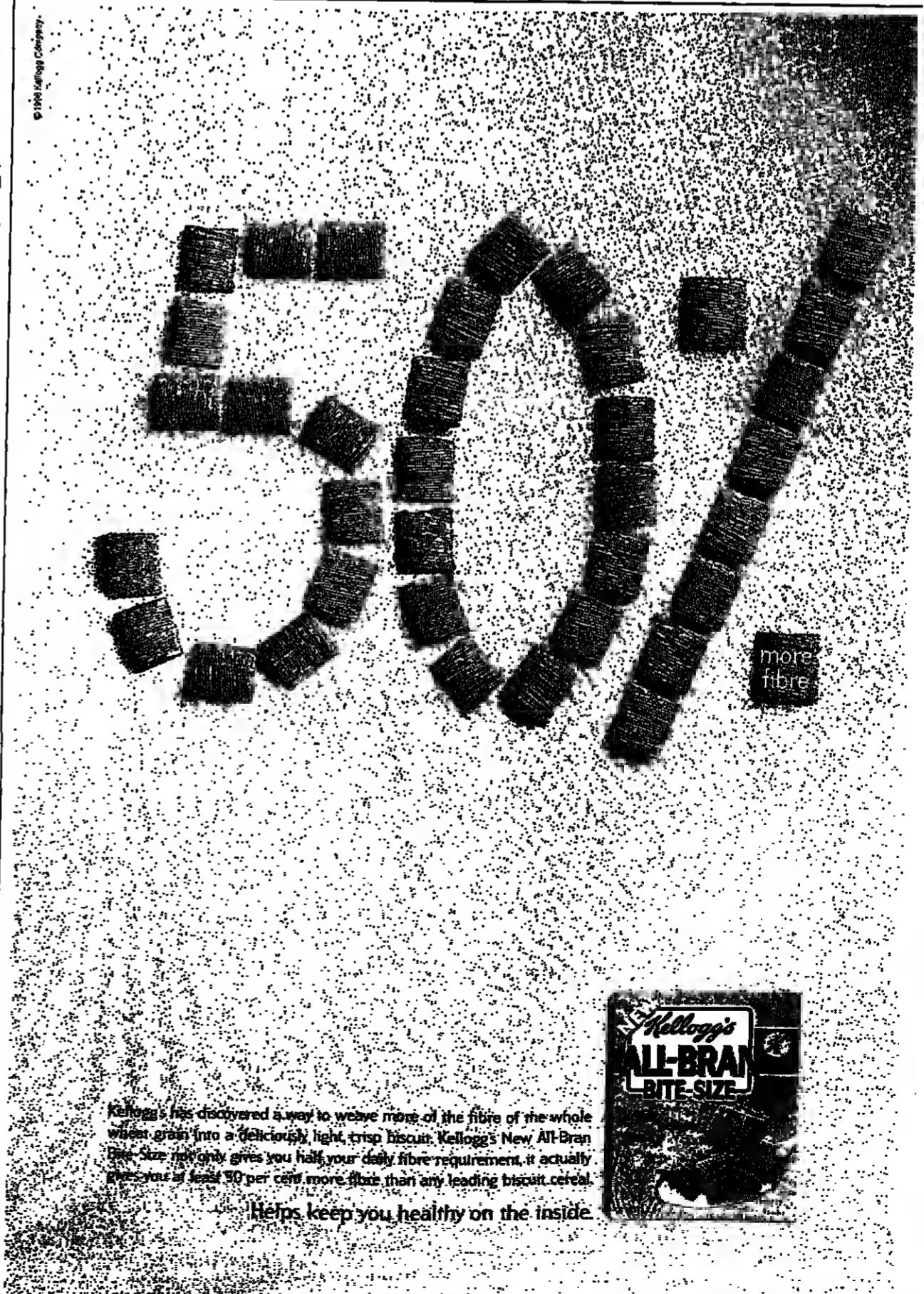
agreements should be overturned when they are deemed to be against natural justice. In the case of the Mercedes-Benz heir, Mick Flick, and his wife, Maya, which was heard in London, the judge awarded Mrs Flick 5.3 per cent of his £9m fortune, although under a pre-nuptial agreement she was only entitled to the "equivalent of the pension of a German judge".

Nicholas Mosley QC, a leading divorce barrister, said: "It is undoubtedly the case that a lot more people are arranging pre-nuptial contracts. I have drawn up quite a few, and the numbers have risen significantly in the last two years. In most of the cases, at least one of the partners is non-British, but there also some where both partners are British. You cannot force a court to enforce the agreement, but you can influence a court."

In the public perception pre-nuptial agreements are associated with the rich and famous: The Trumps, Liz Taylor and Larry Fortensky, Michael Jackson and his wife, Debbie, Mark Phillips and his wife, Sandy Pfeiffer. However, the less wealthy are also increasingly considering it. Stephen Armstrong and his Canadian-born wife, Melinda, who live in Belize Park, north-west London, are drawing up an agreement.

Mr Armstrong, a 38-year-old company director, said: "This is purely a form of insurance to avoid future unpleasantness, although we hope, of course, it will never have to be used. I have been married before and got badly stung at the divorce settlement. But the idea of the pre-nuptial contract in fact came from Mel. She has lived in the States, and of course it is not at all unusual there."

But Julia Cole, of the marriage guidance group Relate, warned: "Couples who go into this may find they have this contract hanging over them like a sword of Damocles. ... One must also take into account that circumstances change during a marriage."



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## Where's the beef? In Downing Street

A cow and her calf gate-crashed Downing Street yesterday as 3,500 farmers converged on Westminster to keep up the pressure for more help for their industry. Farmers have become the new militants of British industry but ministers have dug in their heels against further handouts after last month's £85m of extra aid.

Sir David Naish, President of the National Farmers' Union, protested that businesses were being "crippled by political disinterest in the plight of rural economies". The Prime Minister's spokesman said the Government could not solve all the industry's problems. "There have been difficulties for the beef industry," he said. "We have done what we can to help, but there are limits."

Farmers voiced their anger during a packed meeting near

the Commons and later met MPs. However the orderly lobby descended into chaos when a petition signed by more than half a million people was taken to Downing Street.

Police guarding the entrance to the street originally barred 750kg Mayflower and six-month-old Mayflower III on security grounds. But when the gates were opened to let in a van, there was a surge and both cow and calf ended up inside the gates, clearly panicking.

Eventually they were calmed down and followed the delegation out of Downing Street.

Jack Cunningham, the agriculture minister, has rejected appeals to seek compensation of up to £980m from the European Commission to make up for the effects on farming of the strong pound.

— Stephen Goodwin



Photograph: PA

Move along there, please: the farmer pulls one way and the Downing Street policeman, enacting policy on the hoof, pulls the other

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## Ulster victims' families beg for peace

Politicians in Northern Ireland yesterday sought to restore a sense of equilibrium to the peace process. David McKittrick, Ireland Correspondent, says they are hoping the recent cycle of violence has run its course.

who was a Protestant, his best friends were two Protestant men. He always thought that if he minded his own business and didn't do anybody any harm he would always be all right."

The prime suspects for his killing are the Ulster Defence Association, the paramilitary group with which Jim Guiney was linked. Security sources believe the UDA carried out the killing or gave the go-ahead.

The Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, accused the UDA of being involved in some of the recent killings, alleging the organisation had a "no claim, no blame" policy. But he would not demand the expulsion of the Ulster Democratic Party, the UDA's political wing, from the Stormont talks. "We have always held the view that the loyalists and everybody else should be involved in these discussions, all of us."

The UDP leader, Gary McMichael, said in response that he had no evidence of UDA responsibility for the shooting. The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, condemned the loyalist violence, describing those responsible as "criminal fools" who were being manipulated by republicans. "They are doing the work of republicans."

The violence has brought a wave of condemnation together with calls for politicians not to be defected from the Stormont multi-party talks. Moving appeals have also been made by relatives of the dead for an end to the killings.

On Monday the killing of the loyalist Jim Guiney by the Irish National Liberation Army in the morning was followed by the killing of the Catholic taxi driver Larry Brennan that evening. Mr Brennan, 52, was engaged to a Protestant woman. His 71-year-old mother, Mary, said yesterday she was sure she would die of a broken heart. In 1972 one of her nephews was killed by loyalists.

Mr Brennan's sister, Mrs Eilish O'Reilly, said she did not want anyone else to die, adding: "I don't want anybody to take anybody's life in the name of my brother. All this has to stop. I know sometimes when you say this people don't listen—but nobody is to take any reprisals in the name of my brother."

"He was engaged to a girl

who was a Protestant, his best friends were two Protestant men. He always thought that if he minded his own business and didn't do anybody any harm he would always be all right."

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The Prime Minister's official spokesman said Mrs O'Reilly's words had struck a chord with Mr Blair. "He felt she spoke for what he feels most people think—that this kind of tit-for-tat killing is horrendous. When you have the families saying 'For God's sake stop', people will hope that may have some influence. Our sense is that people involved in these talks process want that to be the place where all the arrangements are put in place."

## Policeman guilty of assault

A police sergeant who slapped a 15-year-old girl he was trying to search was yesterday found guilty of common assault.

Stephen Piper, custody sergeant at Wood Street Police Station, Wakefield, west Yorkshire, said he slapped the girl in May last year, but pleaded not guilty to assault. Stipendiary magistrate Guy Hodgson said he had used unreasonable force. The hearing in Bradford said the girl had been arrested when "ranting and raving" while trying to find out about her boyfriend, who had been arrested earlier. She was placed in a detention room before Sergeant Piper went with three other officers to carry out a routine search. Sergeant Piper said he slapped her across the face as she was being violent towards him and would not be searched.

## E.coli butchers fined £2,250

The butchers business implicated in the world's worst E.Coli 0157 outbreak, in which 20 people died, was yesterday fined a total of £2,250 for food hygiene and safety breaches.

The partnership of John Barr & Son had originally faced four charges and its trial was due to start yesterday at Hamilton Sheriff Court, near Glasgow. John Barr, his wife Elaine, and son Martin, had been due to face three charges each relating to alleged breaches of food hygiene regulations at their shop in Wishaw in 1996. But the charges against the three individuals were dropped. The firm pleaded guilty to two charges similar to the original four it had faced.

## PPL Therapeutics

PPL Therapeutics have asked us to point out that, contrary to our headline of 19 January, cloned sheep do not develop abnormalities. Lambs that were healthy at birth remained healthy. The losses of sheep referred to in the article comprised late stage abortion, still birth or lambs that were not healthy when born and that did not survive.

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BBC  
The BBC has its poet in residence... See Arts News  
meets the extra highly politicised  
versifier who has the job and who poetry spread throughout the corporation and programmes.

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## BBC's first poet in residence takes verse to all corners

The BBC has its first poet in residence. David Lister, Arts News Editor, meets the extrovert and highly politicised versifier who has landed the job and who wants poetry spread throughout the corporation and its programmes.

A poet can versify in gardening and cookery programmes. There can be "a poem from the pulpit" in *Songs of Praise*. John Agard, the BBC's first poet in residence, intends to put himself about.

Agard, 49, has already had published best-selling anthologies aimed at adults and children, and one collection for teenagers, *Get Back Pimples*.

Yesterday, he was seconded by the Poetry Society to the BBC as poet in residence. The Poetry Society has won £450,000 of lottery money for residencies and placements, and already has poets in Kew Gardens and Marks and Spencer.

Bearded with a pony tail, gesticulating expansively, going through a range of Caribbean dialects and fixing the audience with intense stares followed by whimsical darting glances, Agard is a performance poet extraordinaire, as he showed in a Poetry Society reading yesterday.

He was one of 30 applicants for the BBC post, advertised as for Afro-Caribbeans only. This is because the main focus of the six-month residency costing £10,000, will be the "Windrush" season of programmes to mark the 50th anniversary of the first 500 settlers from the Caribbean on the ship MV *Empire Windrush* in May 1948.

Chris Meade, director of the Poetry Society, said: "We're confident this residency will inspire John and the people he'll be working with. He'll be taking poetry to the heart of the BBC."

Steve Pollock, head of BBC Education, added: "As well as everything else I would expect



Poetic exploration: John Agard, the BBC's first poet in residence, reading his work at the Poetry Cafe in Covent Garden, central London, yesterday. Photograph: John Voos

him to sit in the canteen and help those people who feel less than enthusiastic and dedicated to get their creative juices going. He will be a catalyst for creativity."

Agard will, it was confirmed, have input into programming ideas and yesterday he was already arguing for poetry spots in cookery, gardening and *Songs of Praise*.

The poet said: "There will be the occasional workshop for BBC staff. But I don't see what I'm doing as therapy."

Poetry is often presented in the media as something very precious. But there's no reason why, if there's a programme on gardening or cooking you can't have a poem on gardening or

cooking. Poetry can be presented in a much more vibrant way. A poem from the pulpit in *Songs of Praise*, for example. People say they don't read poetry but they seek out their favourite poems for weddings and funerals. So much of our lives are marked out with linear maps. Poetry gives another map."

Talking of the Caribbean connection and areas for poetic exploration, Agard, who came to Britain in 1977 from Guyana, said: "It's very important that the light has been iconised and the dark demonised ... The Caribbean diaspora has been a cause of cultural enrichment. This has got to be got across to the people of Britain."

## Alan Rickman says RSC is wasting young actors' talent

The Royal Shakespeare Company has a history of seeing young actors through to stardom. But one who rose to fame now says it's little more than a production line. David Lister, Arts News Editor, hears Alan Rickman's accusations.

The Royal Shakespeare Company has been condemned by its former star Alan Rickman for neglecting young talent. Its young actors are "dropping like flies," he claims.

The company has a history of nurturing numerous future stars – from Diana Rigg, Judi Dench and Helen Mirren to Kenneth Branagh and Ralph Fiennes. Rickman himself rose to fame with the company's production of *Liaisons Dangereuses* before pursuing a film career – he has just directed a film, *The Winter Guest*, starring Emma Thompson.

In the current issue of *The Stage* magazine, Rickman says it is a miracle that young talent comes through the RSC system. He also criticised the company in a talk he gave at the National Film Theatre. "It's a factory. It has to be. It's all about product endlessly churning out – not sufficiently about process," he said. "They don't look after the young actors ... People are dropping like flies, doing too many shows at once. There ought to be someone who helps them develop." He went on to express unsought sympathy for the RSC's artistic director Adrian Noble: "I remember when Noble was a young, fresh talent. Now he's weighed down by running buildings and financial concerns."

In fact, Noble has two productions, Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*, at the Barbican Centre, both of which have been acclaimed by the critics. And no actors work in more than three productions. It can be argued, though, that the RSC has not had a blockbuster production for some time, and has not been as successful with ticket sales recently as the National Theatre.

An RSC spokesman said Rickman was "out of touch" with the company's activities. It specialised in developing young talent, he said, with experts giving actors classical skills, voice and movement classes. "Alan Rickman's premise is entirely false," he said. "Over the years, the RSC had had a marvellous record in moving on talent. Nearly all of the great artists on stage and sometimes in film – I'd include Alan Rickman in that – have been through that 'factory' that is the RSC. It's not an accusation that holds well. It's fashionable to take that line, but it's patently untrue."



DAME JUDI DENCH is one of many actors who learnt their craft at the RSC before moving to the National Theatre and into television and films. She was a memorable Lady Macbeth, but she also excelled at comedy, notably in Trevor Nunn's 1976 musical of *The Comedy of Errors*.



KENNETH BRANAGH gained his national reputation at the RSC, recording in his biography how he was "breveted", hugged by the then artistic director Trevor Nunn after playing Henry the Fifth. The film of Henry the Fifth that he later directed and starred in owed much to his time with the RSC.



HELEN MIRREN was a young, sexy Hermia in the company's seminal 1970 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by Peter Brook. The set was a white box, the fairy king entered on a trapeze and the RSC not for the first or last time broke the mould. Mirren's film career was just about to take off.

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## Life for men who killed drug dealers

The murders of three drug dealers in a Range Rover in a quiet Essex lane fed to massive publicity. Yesterday, their killers were convicted at the Old Bailey. Kim Sengupta charts a tale of drugs, greed and retribution.

At the trial of two of the men charged with murdering Pat Tate, Anthony Tucker and Craig Rolfe, prosecutor Andrew Munday declared the three victims "were not angels", but "not withstanding their past they had the right to live". Yesterday, at the Old Bailey, Michael Steele, 55, and Jack Whomes, 36, were both given three life sentences for the murders - which they denied - with a recommendation that they serve a minimum of 15 years.

By any social yardstick the three drug dealers shot dead in a Range Rover on a deserted farm track in Essex in December 1995 were bad men. They took professional pride in violence, meted out savage beatings and maimings, and are strongly suspected of carrying out at least one particularly sadistic murder. Tate, 37, Tucker, 38, and Rolfe, 26, all of Essex, made vast amounts of money from drugs, often using as a network a security business run by Tucker which provided bouncers for nightclubs in Essex and east London. One of these clubs was Raquel's, where the ecstasy tablet which killed teenager Leah Betts was bought in November 1995.

Tucker boasted of being a friend of the stars. He had acted as a minder for boxer Nigel Benn who said after his death: "I have known him since I came out of the Army - it's very tragic." Tucker and Rolfe both had minor convictions. Tate

had a much more serious criminal history, including drugs of fences and armed robbery.

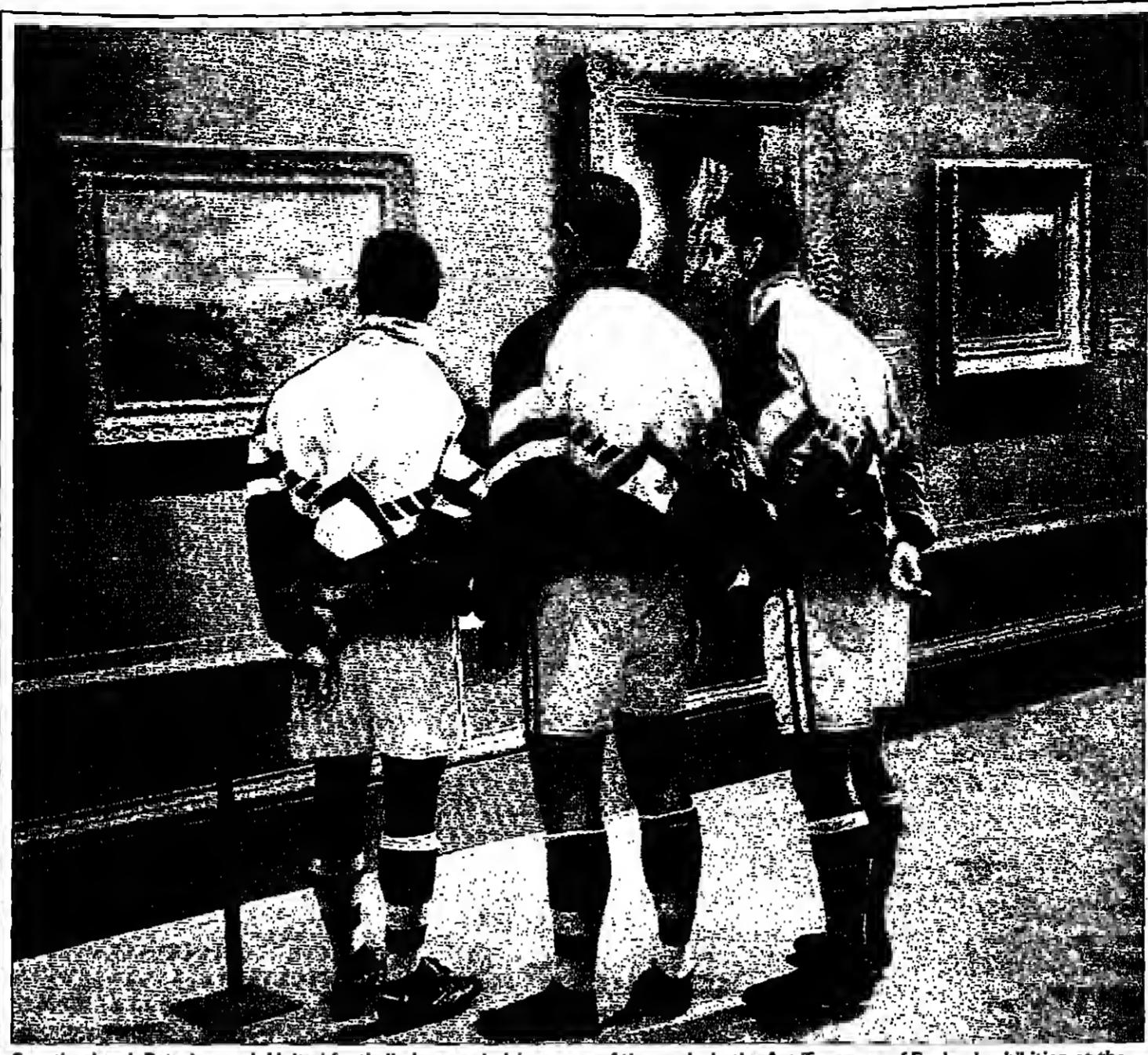
The trio were well placed to take advantage of a tide of narcotics pouring in from the Continent through Essex and East Anglia. Tucker and his men were not averse to tipping off fellow villains. Their violent reputation was normally sufficient to ensure others swallowed the losses.

The feud that led to the Range Rover murders at Retford was over drugs. Tate had met Michael Steele and Jack Whomes while they all served time at Hollesley Bay Prison in Suffolk.

In November 1995, Steele supplied a consignment of cannabis with a street value of around £350,000 to Tate, Tucker and Rolfe. But the quality was so poor that Steele agreed to take back the cannabis and return a deposit of around £70,000. The money was paid, but Tate denied getting it and also failed to return one-third of the drugs haul. He threatened to shoot Steele after making him beg on his knees.

In retaliation, Steele enticed Tate, Tucker and Rolfe to a meeting in the quiet country lane on a cold, snowy night with the promise of a cocaine consignment. Tate and his friends had plans of their own they intended to seize the drugs and, if necessary, eliminate the courier. Instead, they were killed.

At the Old Bailey one of the men charged with the murders, 31-year-old Darren Nicholls, of Braintree, Essex, gave evidence for the Crown. He claimed he picked up Steele and Whomes after the murders, and Whomes had specks of blood on his gloves. Steele reportedly said: "They won't fuck with us again", and he said he had "felt like an angel of death - done everyone a favour and got rid of the sort of people you would not want around".



Sporting hand: Peterborough United football players admiring some of the works in the Art Treasures of England exhibition at the Royal Academy. The club is sponsoring the three-month exhibition

Photograph: David Rose

## Diana fund to seek tenders after fees row

Trustees of the Diana Memorial Fund are to put all work out to tender. The decision follows the row over a £500,000 legal bill, says Michael Streeter, Legal Affairs Correspondent.

The fund trustees publicly thanked their lawyers, Mishcon de Reya, who will continue to carry out legal work until the tendering process is com-

plete. A spokesman for the firm, whose senior partner Anthony Julius is also acting chairman of the trustees, said it welcomed the news and added that it had always advocated a tendering system for the fund. However, the spokesman, Jonathan Cameron, said there was a possibility that the lawyers may not bid for future work.

Mishcon, a publicity-conscious firm, suffered a public grilling last week after a newspaper revealed that the firm had charged the fund

£500,000 since the Princess's death. The company pointed out that Mr Julius was working for the fund without payment and the legal fees were discounted by 20 per cent.

Yesterday the newly enlarged board of trustees met and expressed confidence in him as interim chairman, though it repeated its intention to elect a permanent successor "in due course".

After thanking Mishcon for its work, the board added in a statement: "It is extending procedures for

tendering for all professional services. It will continue to review all charges to the fund by professional and other providers of services."

A fund spokeswoman said the statements had been made to "clarify" the situation following last week's publicity. Mishcon de Reya would continue with its work until the tendering process began. That would start after the appointment of a £75,000-a-year chief executive. The fund has begun advertising and has had more than 300 applications.

## Boycott fined for beating up lover

Geoffrey Boycott was yesterday sentenced to three months' jail suspended for five years for assaulting his ex-lover. The former Yorkshire and England batsman was also fined 50,000 francs (£5,100) by the court in Grasse, France, for punching Margaret Moore.

Boycott was not in court; he sent a fax saying he was on tour in South Africa. Judge Juando said: "How can we interrupt such a noble activity as cricket?" Boycott should have made an effort to be in court, he said.

Mrs Moore said they were at a hotel in Antibes in October 1996 when Boycott attacked her; she suffered black eyes and bruising. "He ... had told me off for not making enough money for him." She acted as an agent for him and arranged contracts with the BBC and newspapers. Mrs Moore told the judge Boycott had beaten her on three previous occasions.

## Hypnosis plea fails

The mother of a young woman who died in her sleep hours after being hypnotised on stage failed in a High Court bid to force a fresh inquest to be held.

Margaret Harper, 52, launched a campaign for a ban on stage hypnosis shows after her daughter Sharron Tabara, 25, died in 1993. She had been put into a trance at the Roebuck pub in Leyland, Lancashire. Her heart had stopped due to congestion in the lungs from inhalation of vomit. The Lancashire coroner Howard McCann recorded a verdict of death through natural causes. Mrs Harper challenged the verdict. But Lord Justice Simon Brown, sitting with Mr Justice Mance, said yesterday there was no realistic prospect of changing the verdict by re-opening the inquiry.

## CID suspensions

Three more officers from a town's police force which carried out a "zero tolerance" policy on crime have been suspended as part of a corruption investigation, it emerged yesterday.

This takes the total number of suspensions in Middlesbrough CID to seven officers, with a further four being moved from CID to other departments.

The investigation began in September last year after two defendants changed their pleas at trial. In December, Ray Mallon the head of Middlesbrough CID, and architect of the Cleveland force's controversial crime policy, was also suspended.

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## Women unhappy with pregnancy care, survey reveals

Almost half of women are not completely happy with the care they receive during pregnancy, labour and after the birth of their baby, it was revealed yesterday.

A survey of almost 2,500 women in England and Wales by the independent spending watchdog the Audit Commission found that only between 50

per cent and 60 per cent strongly agreed that the care they received was good. And standards in maternity care varied significantly between regions.

For example, in the North, 36 per cent of women have more than 16 antenatal visits compared with 41 per cent in the South-east who have 10 or

under. And whereas 15 per cent of women in the South-west and North-west stay in hospital six days or more following the birth, in East Anglia 23 per cent of women go home with in 24 hours.

The maternity service most likely to be criticised was hospital postnatal care, the report

found. Areas of particular concern were the contradictory advice given about breast feeding and low staffing levels.

In common with other studies, the survey shows that women want more information about their options and about the care that is provided before, during and after birth.

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## Algeria rejects UN help as stunned survivors tell of massacre horror



A bus bomb killed one and wounded at least 20 in central Algiers yesterday during the EU delegates' visit.

Photograph: AFP

**CID suspensions**  
The European Union has received a humiliating rebuff in its cautious attempts to reduce the bloodshed in Algeria. At the scene of one recent massacre, which visiting ministers were banned from visiting, our correspondent found private horror and public deceit.

Foreign Office minister Derek Fatchett, leading a one-day EU ministerial trip to Algeria, said that the EU's mission to Algeria had been an "important step". At the end of a day of talks with newspaper editors, government ministers and representatives of the official opposition, he spoke of "taking the dialogue with Algeria forward", after a visit which took place "in a spirit of partnership". And he talked of the "European solidarity at the terror and pain" of the Algerian people.

As Mr Fatchett spoke, the violence continued. Sixteen people were reported to have been killed in an attack on a bus east of Algiers. In central Al-

giers, one person was killed in a bus bomb yesterday afternoon and at least 20 were wounded. Authorities, who sharply restrict correspondents' movements, prevented foreign journalists from visiting the scene.

There could be no hiding the fact that the EU's first attempt at mediation in Algeria has backfired, even worse than its early and doomed involvement in Yugoslavia.

Algerians do not want help of the kind that the EU is offering – and the EU is reluctant to talk tough. Mr Fatchett shied away like a bolting horse from a questioner who asked whether sanctions against Algeria might be considered, if other methods fail. Looking nervously at the Algerian deputy foreign minister who was sitting beside him, he said that the question was "jumping a long way down the road".

In reality, however, the mission signal failed two important tests. Algeria flatly refused European requests for a visit by a United Nations rapporteur on human rights, first proposed last year. And the ministers were refused permission to visit the site of a notorious recent massacre at Sidi Hamed, less than 20

miles from Algiers, where it would have been possible to hear survivors' accounts firsthand.

Mr Fatchett's official statement expressed "regret" at the Algerian refusal to allow a UN rapporteur to visit, and also at the "security and practical rea-

sons" which had made it impossible to visit Sidi Hamed. Some European diplomats were more outspoken, however, admitting that the delegation had in effect been slapped in the face.

At the massacre site where more than 100 people died, the nightmare of what happened is difficult to grasp – even, it sometimes seems, for the still dazed survivors. In the village video room where the attack began at around 8pm on Saturday 10 January, a blood-soaked jacket still lies on the floor, together with piles of the victims' shoes. A bloody handprint claws at the wall. Seven-

teen were killed in this room alone when a bomb exploded, followed by shooting. Still-banded surviving children described yesterday how they escaped through a window.

The attack on the video room was, however, was only the beginning of Sidi Hamed's apocalypse. Walk through the burnt-out ruins of the village, and you come on shocked survivors, sitting or standing hopelessly in what were once their homes. In an empty voice, one survivor (nobody here wants to give their names) describes how his three children had their throats cut in this small room. His wood-chopping axe was used as an additional murder weapon, and is still splattered with his children's blood.

And so it goes on – such multiple tales of horror that the very act of listening feels like a crime. At the cemetery, dozens of fresh graves suggest that if anything, understated; many villagers say that around 200 died. Other bodies are buried in cemeteries nearby.

The villagers' personal horror is accompanied by political deceit. When you manage to find privacy from the armed men who seek to listen in every conversation, villagers tell a unanimous story: that the army, which has a base less than half a kilometre from the edge of the village, did not intervene until the massacre was over.

One man – alerted by his teenage son, who managed to run away even as his four friends' throats were cut – hid with his small children in the trees outside the village. The killings continued for an hour.

"The army arrived at the edge of the village after a quarter of an hour. But they did not go into the village. The terrorists stayed for another hour."

A generous view is that the army was too frightened. But it is clear that many in Sidi Hamed fear some kind of complicity. Either way, the government has done nothing to expose the army's inaction – which fits with a pattern of allegations in recent months.

Villagers always stop telling you their story when yet another armed man in uniform sidles into earshot. Most chillingly of all, a policeman declared, after overhearing part of one man's harrowing story: "I think he's a terrorist." Why? "Because he's still alive."

BY STEVE CRAWSHAW

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**Castro's historic gamble: can the Pope help Cuba to come in from the cold?**

**Fidel Castro is preparing his country for the papal visit, on which the Cuban leader is taking a huge risk given the Pope's anti-Communist record. Susie Morgan reports from Havana.**

The incongruous combination of Catholicism and Marxism-Leninism that epitomises Cuba can be seen vividly in Havana's Revolution Square. Against a huge backdrop of Che Guevara, the country's most famous revolutionary guerrilla icon and martyr, the Havana orchestra – complete with traditional guitars and maracas and flanked by Catholic priests in sumptuous robes – is busy rehearsing



Holy icon: Two Cubans paste up a poster of the Pope in Havana yesterday. It reads 'messenger of love and hope'.

Photograph: Eric Draper/AP

"We hope the Pope's visit will reinvigorate the church, end the persecution we've had, the confrontation and incomprehension of the regime, and allow us more space and freedom," said Father Jose Felix Perez at the church of Santa Rita in Miramar, a Havana suburb, as hundreds of coloured posters of His Holiness bearing the inscription "hope and freedom" were handed out.

Fervent Catholic Rita Maria Grau, a 76-year-old architect, echoed Fr Perez's hopes and elaborated on Catholics' persecution, describing how believers such as herself had suffered: "We were banned from jobs in the party, prevented from attending university and in my case sacked from my job for a while."

The visit – a huge gamble

by Mr Castro – is seen as an attempt by the veteran revolutionary to end his country's isolation, gain respectability by receiving the world's moral leader and obtain favourable publicity (more than 3,000 foreign journalists, half of them from the United States, have been accredited for the visit).

He also expects the Pope to speak out against the longstanding US embargo that has bitten deeply into the country's economy. Some analysts, however, believe he needs the embargo as a figleaf to explain the failure of his system and could face greater political difficulties if it ended.

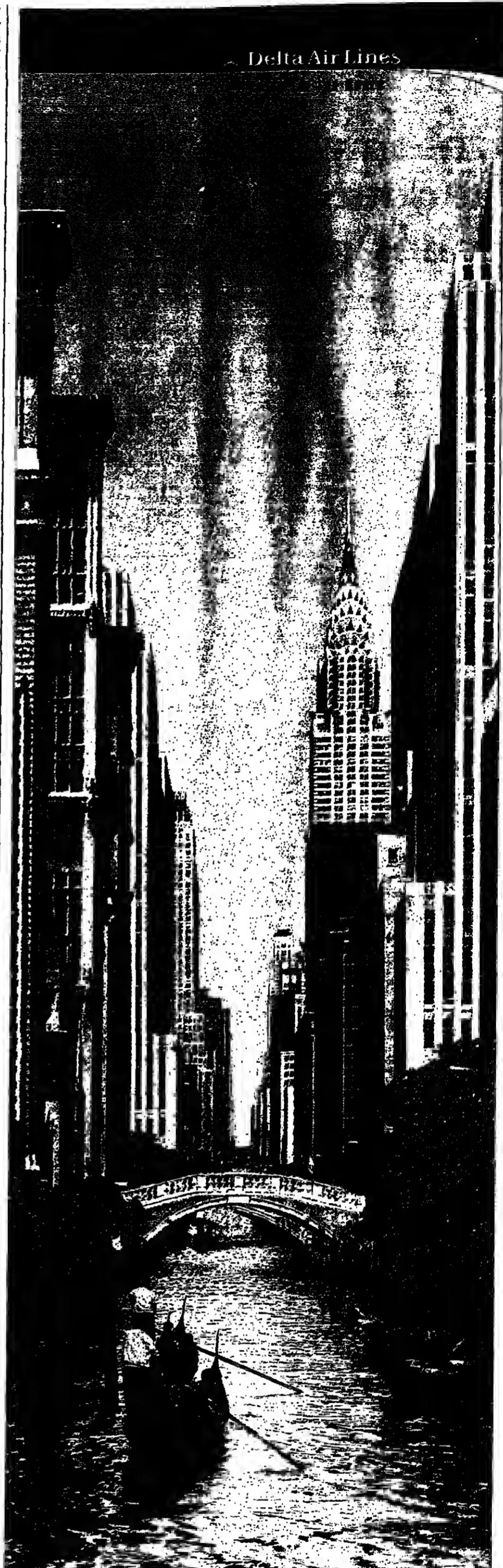
Others believe both Mr Castro and the Pope could gain from the encounter. "I think Fidel can use this visit to his advantage, at least in the short-term, and that the Pope

can obtain what he wants – the strengthening of the Catholic church here," one Cuban analyst commented.

This is a key goal given that the Catholic church has lost some 40 million Catholic believers in Latin America over the past 10 years, most to evangelical Protestant movements. But unique to Cuba, there is another very important Afro-Caribbean religion, known as Santeria, which was introduced by African slaves and which some experts say is of greater importance than either of the established Christian churches – although many Cubans practice both Christianity and Santeria. Religious analysts say one of the Pope's aims is to reclaim these "pagan" worshippers.

To underline the fact that there is no conflict between Communism and Catholicism – and to ensure that the important papal visit goes smoothly, Fidel Castro has been at pains to prepare his nation for the event. Last Friday, he gave a six-hour televised address to explain to Cubans that he and the Pope see eye to eye on many key issues and to instruct Cubans to turn out in force for the masses to be held throughout the country over the coming week.

A number of older Cubans admitted that they found their leader's U-turn hard to accept but said they would obey his instructions.



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face tax  
inquiry

## Q: What do you get when you cross a llama with a camel?

**A: More wool, a nicer temperament, a better size – and a hybrid called a 'cama'**

**Crossing a camel with a llama hasn't been possible for 30 million years. Now Lulu Skidmore, a British scientist, has managed the feat to produce the 'cama'.** Charles Arthur, Science Editor, reports.

Lulu Skidmore has been trying for two years to cross a camel and a llama. In mad transatlantic dashes, couriers would take a package of sperm collected at a llama ranch in Montana, get on a plane in Minneapolis, run across Gatwick Airport to catch a plane to Dubai, and hurry from there to the Camel Reproduction Centre.

The ancestors of camels made their way to Africa across a land bridge over the Bering Strait, while those of modern-day llamas headed south. Thus the species now occupy totally different environments – camels in dry, hot environments at sea level, while the llama family exists in the thin air at 20,000ft at temperatures as low as -20C. Other crosses such as mules and zeehorses (zebra-horse hybrids) are sterile, though there are hopes that the cama will not be. Another cross – between a female camel and a male llama – is due in May or June. The work is funded by Sheikh Mohammed, who uses Dr Skidmore's expertise to breed faster racing camels.

At the Equine Fertility Centre in Newmarket, Professor Twink Allen, who was Dr Skidmore's former tutor, said: "If [the cama] is fertile, then it would mean we have created a new species – and given that these days we are wiping species out daily, that would be a good thing. It's nothing like Dolly [the cloned sheep] but to have done it at all is a great achievement."

Rama, who weighed 12lbs at birth, was slightly premature, born after a gestation of ten and a half months. "We hope it will have the best qualities of both animals," said Dr Skidmore. "Llamas can be useful pack animals, but they're a bit flighty and silly, while camels can be stubborn. If you could get a temperament between the two, that could be very useful." She said the cama should have the prized fleece of the llama, but because of its larger size it should give more wool.

"All research has its ups and downs," said the 34-year-old scientist yesterday. "But this makes it worth all that hassle."

The object of her pleasure is Rama, a cross between a male camel and a female llama that

### Farmed drugs a step closer after cloning success

American scientists have used cloning to produce two genetically-identical calves which contain extra genes – a key step towards "pharming", the mass production of drugs for humans through animals' milk.

The new development, by the team at the University of Massachusetts and Advanced Cell Technology, is not as radical as that which produced Dolly the sheep.

The two calves – named George and Charlie – were not cloned from an adult cell, as Dolly was. They are not the first transgenic clones either: the Roslin Institute and PPL, the British company which funded Dolly's development, have already produced Molly and Polly, cloned lambs with a human gene, whose milk contains a protein helpful to blood clotting.

But Ian Wilmut, of the Roslin Institute, said that drug-making cows could be more valuable, because they produce much more milk than sheep. "Obviously I'm delighted that

the nuclear transfer technology is very robust," he said upon learning of the cloned calves.

"Pharming" offers the promise of farm animals whose milk naturally contains useful drugs. By cloning them, scientists could be sure that there was no dangerous genetic variation between the members of an entire flock.

The calves were born last week at a ranch in Texas. They contain two genetic alterations – a "marker" gene and one that made cells resistant to an antibiotic. Those markers have shown up everywhere, from the blood to the spleen to the bones. The next step would be to produce cloned cattle with useful, drug-making genes.

"It's not Dolly, but it's a substantial contribution," said Dr Caird Renfro, president of the International Embryo Transfer Society, where the work was announced. "We've all been awaiting more information on what you can do with cattle. A cow can make a tremendous amount of protein."

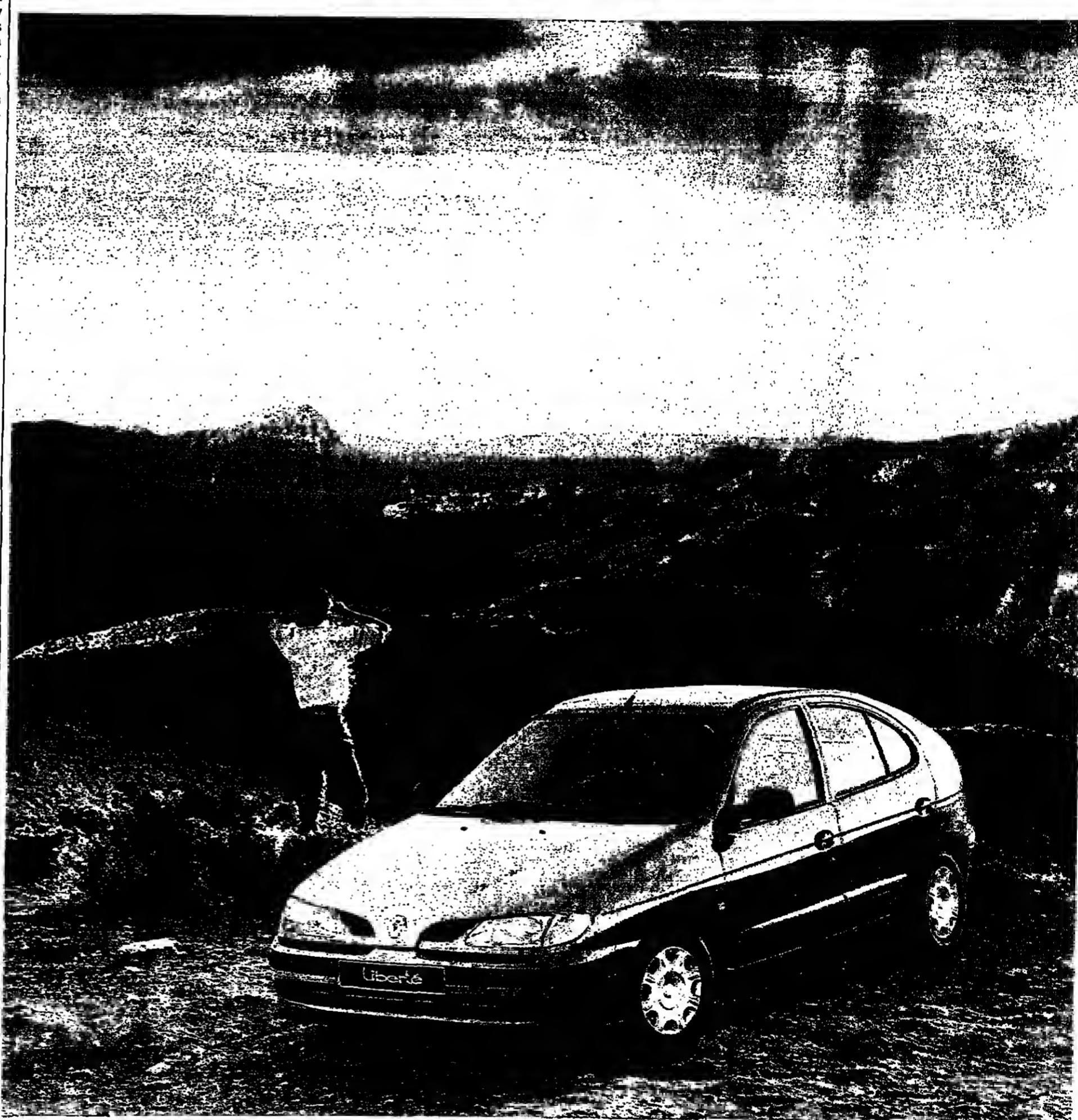
— Charles Arthur

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Continental drift: A worker at Dubai's Camel Reproduction Centre with the 'cama'. This is a cross between an Old World camel, above, and a New World llama, below. Main photograph: Reuters



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## 11/WORK

## Wanted: a tough new law to promote women

The Blair government was yesterday challenged to introduce a 'super law' aimed at giving women a fast track to equality. Barrie Clement, Labour Editor, explains that ministers and employers may want to temper justice with considerations of cost and potential conflict.

The Equal Opportunities Commission yesterday called for a tough new law which could force employers to promote women where they had been the victims of discrimination.

Under the proposals, industrial tribunals could also demand that women were taken back into jobs where they proved they were dismissed because of gender bias.

In a report issued as part of a three-month consultation exercise, the commission argues that employers should be ordered to continue to pay compensation as long as they refuse to take corrective action. At the moment, tribunals can only order a "one-off" payment to the aggrieved.

While employers may contend that such a law would constitute a considerable burden and lead to conflict at the workplace, the Government may prevaricate over the EOC's main proposal for legislation, which it wants to be introduced during this parliament. It is demanding a single "equal treatment" Act which would give women a fast track to equality. Given that women's earnings are just 80 percent of men's, such legislation could lead to claims worth billions and ministers may feel the need to phase in such a provision.

Kamlesh Bahl, chairwoman of the commission, said legislation was a "mess and a nightmare", with more than a dozen British laws plus European di-

rectives. There was an urgent need for a review and a major overhaul, she said.

In some cases, it took more than a decade for women to claim equal pay and with pregnancy and maternity statutes were complicated and contradictory and were a disincentive to the employment of women.

The commission's chairwoman argued that equal opportunity was a fundamental right and that both the Government and employers would see the legitimacy of a review. A new law would save them millions of pounds in legal fees and address employer's demands for "clarity", she said.

The consultation paper, which will go to all interested individuals and organisations, calls for a fundamental change from the emphasis on fighting discrimination to promoting "the positive right to equal treatment". Commissioners would make employers responsible for promoting equal opportunities – another possible bone of contention – and extend protection to include cases involving sexual orientation and "gender reassignment".

A suggestion that might concern the armed forces, however, is the contention that sexual discrimination laws concerning the military should be amended. At the moment, the forces are allowed to discriminate in cases where they believe "combat effectiveness" could be impaired by ensuring equality. Ms Bahl believes that the only factor to be considered in recruitment or promotion is whether the candidate has the relevant experience, qualifications and abilities.

Ms Bahl acknowledged that there had been significant changes in society since the current legislation was drawn up more than 20 years ago and that men sometimes now felt they were victims. In particular the commission was investigating the academic under-achievement of boys.



Fight against injustice: Pam Enderby took more than a decade to win her claim for equal pay

Photograph: Andrew Buerman

**'After more than a decade of fighting for equality, my friends are still wanting to know when the drinks will be on me'**

Pam Enderby became aware of the injustice of her position 11 years ago. After huge legal fees expended by the Equal Opportunities Commission and her union to win her equal pay – and a similar amount expended by the National Health Service to deny her extra money – she is still waiting for compensation.

Last summer it was finally agreed that as a speech therapist in the health service her work was of equal value to that undertaken by pharmacists and psychologists.

"After more than a decade, my friends are still waiting to know when the drinks will be on me," she said.

Ms Enderby, 47, was paid considerably less than her male colleagues. As head of her hospital department, she found she was under very similar pressures to them. In fact she had a larger staff and a wider area of research to cover than her opposite number in the psychology department.

Part of her difficulty has been that she was invoking law which means women who perform work of "equal value" to men should be paid the same. This law is something of a minefield. It is easier – but not without difficulty – to win equal pay for the same job.

The concept of equal value is fraught with difficulty and the NHS decided to exploit the problems to the full. However, 1,200 other cases hinge on the Enderby judgment and it could cost the health service £30m in back pay and legal costs. The EOC and the MSF union have been landed with a legal bill in excess of £100,000.

Ms Enderby's case, according to the commission, is a shining example of the Byzantine nature of present legislation and the urgent need to reform it. She has since left the health service to become professor of community rehabilitation at Sheffield University. "The problem with a lot of female professions is that there is a 'ceiling' that is not the case in male dominated professions. Men were always expected to have a career."

Her new job uses her expertise in speech therapy, but many of her colleagues have to leave the specialism to go into hospital management.

She believes there is a potential for change under the present government. "It was obvious that under the previous administration there was an absence of political will. Every obstacle was put in one's way."

— Barrie Clement

## The home working revolution has stalled

The brave new world where most of us were expected to work at home in front of a computer has not happened.

In the 1980s it was estimated that around half the labour force could become "teleworkers". Yet little over a million people are estimated to work from home, and many are in low-paid, unskilled jobs owing little to technology. Apparently only 6 per cent of organisations have such arrangements, according to a report out yesterday.

Many industries were simply not suited to teleworking and some managers were suspicious of the whole idea. There seemed to be problems of "ignorance, mistrust and envy" among both managers and colleagues and a belief that home-workers were "getting away with something", the report said. Not all employees had the requisite self-contained personality, the "understanding partner" or the spacious homes to deal with.

Interviews with 62 home-workers, mostly professionals and managers, showed work-related stress was reduced but family problems were exacerbated, the researchers, Dr Yehuda Baruch and Professor Nigel Nicholson, said. They found nevertheless that an overwhelming majority felt that working from home made them better performers and wanted to continue. Most of the sample had volunteered to work from home with only 1 in 10 saying it had been imposed on him or her.

The study, *Home, sweet work: requirements for effective home-working*, sponsored by Sun Life Assurance, found there was a clear need for self-management and self-discipline among such workers. Extroverts could suffer "social deprivation" from the absence of workmates, it said.

While the authors acknowledged advantages in home-working, they expressed concern about the creation of an "autistic society" in which a lack of contact with others might render teleworkers less able to deal with strangers. Teleworking might be for "the few rather than the many", they said.

— Barrie Clement

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Please send your completed questionnaire to: City Break Questionnaire, Freepost 13583, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5DL, to arrive no later than 31st January 1998.

1. How many city breaks holidays in the UK have you had in the last 12 months (excluding visits to family and friends)?

None (go to Q3) 5) 0

One 1

Two 2

Three 3

Four+ 4

5) 7-8

3. How many city break holiday abroad have you had in the last 12 months (excluding visits to family and friends)?

None (go to Q5) 8) 0

One 1

Two 2

Three 3

Four+ 4

5) 7-8

4. Which cities abroad did you visit?

Amsterdam 9) 1

New York 10) 1

Paris 2

Prague 3

Berlin 4

Rome 5

Madrid 6

Venice 7

Other - please state.....

5. Thinking about the last city break you took, was it in the UK or abroad?

UK 11) 1

Abroad 2

6. How many nights did you spend away?

1-2 12) 1

3-4 2

5+ 3

7. And what type of accommodation did you stay in?

4-5 star hotel 13) 1

Self catering 4

Bed and breakfast 5

Youth hostel 6

Other - please state.....

8. Regarding your choice of accommodation, how would you rate the following in order of importance, with 1 being not at all important and 5 being very important?

Price/deal 14) 1

Picture in brochure/paper 15) 1

Type of hotel 16) 1

Location 17) 1

Facilities 18) 1

Other 19) 1

9. What was the cost in total per person?

£50 or under 20) 1

£51-£150 2 2

£151-£250 3

£251-£350 4

£351+ 5

10. What was the main method of transport to your last city break destination?

Own car 21) 1

Hired car 2

Ferry/ hovercraft 3

Other - please state..... 8

11. From the following list choose the three most important factors influencing your choice of city destination.

Price 22) 1

Museums/ places of historic interest 2

Nightclubs 4

Shopping 5

Theatres/ shows 6

Restaurants/ food 7

Distance from home 8

Country 9

Recommendations from friends 10

Newspaper article 23) 1

TV programme 2

An event in the city 3

Other - please state..... 8

12. How did you book you last city break?

Through a travel agent 24) 1

Teletext 2

Telephone direct to company 4

Through a newspaper 5

Through a magazine 6

Other - please state..... 8

13. Which of the following do you use for information about what to do on your city break?

Guide book 25) 1

Tourist information 2

Newspaper articles 3

Advice from friends 4

Television holiday programmes 5

Other - please state..... 8

14. Have you ever been on any of the following holidays within the UK in the last 12 months?

Health farm 26) 1

Boating 2

Other..... 3

Golf 3

Murder mystery 4

27) Yes 1

No 2

15. Have you ever responded to any advertising in The Independent or Independent on Sunday regarding a holiday?

28) Yes 1

No 2

29) 1

30) 2

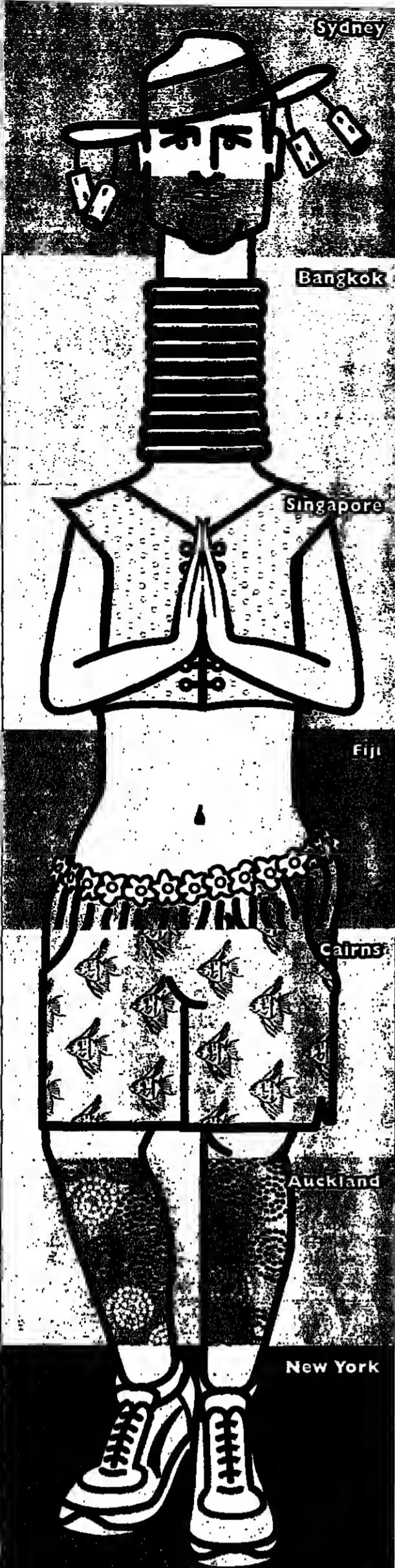
31) 3

32) 3

33) 4

34) 5

35) 5</p



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## Germans demand return of 'stolen' art

Germany's Wuppertal museum is claiming the French stole 16 works of art at the end of the war - including a Renoir. The French insist they were bought fairly by the Vichy regime. John Lichfield reports on a startling reversal of roles.

A German museum is demanding the return of 16 works of art which it claims were

seized by French troops at the end of the Second World War.

The formal request, by the Von de Heydt Museum in Wuppertal, near Bonn, has been frostily rejected by the French authorities. "It is like bumping into granite," says the museum director, Sabine Fehlemann.

Paris does not deny that the works, including a sketch by Auguste Renoir and two paintings by Eugène Delacroix, were "repatriated" from the Wuppertal museum in 1945. It does not deny that the paintings

were purchased, openly and legally, by the German museum in the Paris art market during the war.

But the French government points out that the franc had been steeply devalued from 1940, on Nazi orders, and Vichy France had been forced to pay large sums in "reparations" to Hitler's Germany. As a result, German buyers were flush with francs and able to buy French art works at absurdly low "real" prices. By an edict of the provisional de Gaulle government in London in 1943, ratified by

the French parliament after the war, all purchases made under the German occupation were declared null and void.

Ms Fehlemann testily rejects such accusations. She points out that she is, herself, a quarter Jewish and that Germany also suffered artistic devastation in the Nazi period.

Her own museum, she says, had 180 works of art confiscated by the Nazis as "degenerate" in 1937-8. It then lost another 80 works, including 36 paintings, after the Allies invaded Germany in 1945. Some of these works, she insists, were pur-

chased long before the war. "We were pillaged twice, first by the Nazis and then by the Allies."

Other German museums and art collections have declined to follow Ms Fehlemann's lead so far. The German government says it supports her initiative but is unwilling to press the case directly with the French authorities.

Françoise Cachin, director of French national museums, commented: "Quite honestly, I can't see how it would be in Bonn's interest to associate itself with the actions of the Nazis."



Trouble brewing: Smoke rises from the central craters of Mt Etna in Sicily yesterday. Since 10 January Europe's tallest active volcano at 3,300 meters has been shaken by more than 100 small earthquakes. Etna's last eruption was six years ago but fears are rising of a major activity

Photograph: Fabrizio Villa/AP

## Turkey's Islamists try deal to lift ban

Turkey's Islamists have offered to ease their opposition to conservative Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz's coalition in an effort to water down a court ban on the Islam-based Welfare Party, government MPs said yesterday.

"They said they would change the tactics they have used until now. That is, they won't block parliament and present motion after motion to impede the passage of laws," said Ugur Aksos, a senior member of Mr Yilmaz's Motherland Party.

He added that the Islamist leader, Necmettin Erbakan, made the offer to Mr Yilmaz at a meeting on Friday just before the constitutional court banned Welfare on charges of threatening the secularist constitution.

The Turkish press says Mr Erbakan wants the government, a minority coalition of left and right, to help Welfare avoid the worst of the ban in return for the Islamists calling a parliamentary truce.

The court also threw Mr Erbakan out of parliament and banned him from political leadership for five years, though the ruling does not come into force for at least two weeks.

"The nation has the will and common sense to correct these mistakes.

"The place to correct these mistakes is parliament," Mr Erbakan told a meeting of party MPs yesterday.

Mr Aksos said Welfare had made no specific demands of the government but had urged cooperation on democratisation reforms that could prevent a future Islamist party from suffering Welfare's fate and help Mr Erbakan stay in parliament.

"They said they would vote with us to pass whatever law was proposed to improve democracy and freedom," Mr Aksos said.

Mr Erbakan later said he had also proposed cooperation in pressing through much-needed economic reforms.

"If a programme of lifting the barriers of economic development of the country is included within this framework of cooperation ... the country will gain a great deal.

"We discussed this programme with the other parties and we saw that all of them nurtured the same desires," Mr Erbakan said.

— Reuters, Ankara

## Italian MP escapes arrest

MPs in Italy yesterday voted against allowing the arrest of a former defence minister and top aide of former prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. Milan prosecutors suspect Cesare Previti of corrupting Rome judges with a slush fund allegedly set up by Mr Berlusconi. Five months ago, they asked for Mr Previti's arrest because they insisted there was a danger he could tamper with evidence. But the Chamber of Deputies refused to lift Mr Previti's immunity against arrest. Earlier this month the chamber's justice commission recommended voting against lifting immunity of the deputy, from Mr Berlusconi's conservative Forza Italia party.

— AP, Rome

## Jospin rebuffs jobless

The embattled French Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, vowed yesterday there would be no U-turn in his Socialist-led government's policies on employment, Europe and public spending. Mr Jospin, facing a protest by the unemployed which began five weeks ago, said the government would not raise taxes or inflate the budget deficit to meet demands for an increase in welfare benefits.

— Reuters, Paris

## Killer attracts Disney

Disney film producers have bought the rights to do a remake of the Polish movie *Killer*, which topped Poland's box office charts at the end of last year. Janusz Machulski, who wrote and directed *Killer*, said Disney is paying \$600,000 (£375,000) to do the English-language remake.

*Killer*, which translates to *Killer* in English, was made for only 1.8 million zloty (£312,500). It has sold more than 1.6 million tickets in Poland and earned 13.4 million zloty since its release in October. The film is a comedy about a kind-hearted taxi driver who is mistaken for a serial murderer.

— AP, Warsaw

## Netanyahu gets a frosty reception

President Bill Clinton met the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, in the White House yesterday. But no one seriously believes the meeting will yield any substantial progress towards peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

"Benjamin Netanyahu is the

real ally of right-wing Christians," enthused Mr Falwell, an enemy of President Clinton's so vicious that he accuses him of having dealt in narcotics and of having been involved in the death of Vincent Foster, the former White House official who committed suicide. "I love democracy, and Israel is the only true democracy in the Middle East," Mr Falwell declared.

The atmospheres surrounding the White House meeting served only to illustrate just how far apart the US and Israeli visions for peace in the Middle East remain. President Clinton and Mr Netanyahu did not dine together, they did not hold a joint press conference, they did not even appear in public together.

"We're treating him like the president of Bulgaria," a Clinton administration official told the *Washington Post*. "Actually," the official added, referring to a scheduled Bulgarian visit to Washington next month, "I think Clinton will go jogging with the president of Bulgaria, so that's not fair."

As for the Israeli leader, his main objective in visiting Washington appears to have been to shore up right-wing support for his policies in the US. On arriving in Washington on Monday night he headed straight for

— John Carlin, Washington

## Havel takes third crown

Prague's "philosopher king" bounced back from cancer, scandal and political intrigue to claim his crown for the third time - but not without a few alarms.

Václav Havel, spiritual leader of the Velvet Revolution of 1989, was due to be acclaimed as president last night by the Czech parliament, but he failed to win an absolute majority in the first round of voting. He was 10 votes short in the lower house and two in the Senate, but the two other candidates did not gain enough support to advance to a second round, leaving him to march on unchallenged.

— Imre Karacs, Bonn

establishment has been involved in a bizarre cover-up.

For, unlike previous wars, Vietnam yielded few bodies that could not be identified, to bury at Arlington National Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknowns. Eventually one was found and on Memorial Day 1984 President Ronald Reagan presided over a ceremony where, choked with emotion, he asked: "As a child, did he play on some street in a great American city? ... Did he marry? Did he have children?"

The answers, if the Blasie family is proved right, are, in order: Yes, St Louis; no; and no. Should tests prove Lt Blasie is the unknown soldier, his family say they want a headstone with his name put over his grave.

— John Carlin, Washington

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## In 1998, a waiter knows what he's waiting for

Food as fashion, restaurant as temple, chef as culture hero, waiter as ... well, waiter probably, but not as you'd have thought of him a decade ago. The voguishness of the dining trade, the knowingness of the customers and the new vistas of the service industries have changed the game. Annabelle Thorpe meets a rhapsodic Roger.

It's 6pm in the evening. Roger Gellman, immaculately dressed in Jasper Conran, casts an eye over his corner of the room. The tables are immaculate, ashtray and condiments equidistant from the tips of the gleaming knives. A quiet hum flows from the bar area, where the first post-work drinks of the day are being sipped - chilled Chardonnay and long gin and tonics. Now is the lull before the storm, a half hour of quiet calm before the glass doors of Mezzo, Conran's Soho emporium, swing open and the great and the glamorous of London take their places in one of the capital's biggest restaurants.

"The evening begins with the first customers, and from then on you don't have time to think," says Roger. "In an evening I'll serve roughly 100 people with one other waiter. It's a case of keeping your head above water and dealing with each situation as it occurs."

Roger has worked as a waiter at Mezzo for two years. His nights are a blur of Bolly and *bouillabaisse*, of orders punched furiously into his MICRO ordering system that feeds the requests from hungry punters straight into the frenetic kitchen that hustles and hustles behind the huge glass windows. He carries plates, juggles glasses, recommends wines, advises on food, flatters, flirts and generally has the time of his life.

Right now, restaurants are at the cutting edge. Catering is one of the industries of the moment. Eating out is fashionable, food is fashionable. A job which once might have looked like drudgery has acquired a sort of allure it never had before. Chefs are not the only ones whose status has changed in the last few years. Slowly but surely, respect is being accorded to those further down the service industry scale.

"I never imagined a career as a waiter. I was kind of directionless and Mezzo seemed a trendy place to work so I went for the interview. At the time it was no big career choice, but now I wouldn't want to work in any other industry. People think of waiting as the sort of job you do in university vacations when you can't find anything better. In fact it's far more like serving your apprenticeship for a career in the service industries in general and there's a huge choice of careers to go into."

For Roger, a night's work consists of far more than simply bringing plates to the table. "It's a very sales based job," he says,



Roger Gellman: 'I wouldn't want to work in any other industry'

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

"In some ways more than service. It's about promoting wines, selling particular dishes, using sales skills. We have regular briefings, wine tastings and every time the menu changes we taste each of the dishes. Customers look to us for recommendations and we have to know what we are talking about."

"Being a waiter is not an easy job," says Maria Scuton, General Manager for Circus and the Avenue, two of the most fashionable restaurants in London, "and it's high time the profile of the job was raised. It is a tremendously important job and should be recognised as such. It's not simply a case of serving food and pouring wine, clients look to those serving to advise and guide. The eating-out public is far more sophisticated than it used to be - waiters have to know the food and wines to recommend - they take an active part in the meal itself."

As the worlds of media, fashion and restaurants merge into one another, be-

ing seen to be "known" in certain restaurants becomes ever more crucial. "Regulars will ring me up and ask for special attention when they come in with guests," says Maria, "but it's always important for all our staff to make them feel special."

"The more people ask you, the better," says Martin Hobby, who used to work as a waiter before moving on to manage a wine bar in the City. "You feel like the clients value your opinion and the knowledge you have. It can put you on a real high - and if the restaurant is buzzing there's no feeling to beat it. Even if something goes wrong with the meal you can usually rescue the situation. It makes you feel good to know you can still deal with problems even when you're trying to do a million things at once."

Maria, who missed the days of waiting, believes time served on the shop floor can set you up for life. "If you learn a trade as a waiter in a good restaurant you will never

be out of a job. I spent a year in New York and worked constantly in good restaurants. It doesn't matter that you can't phone for a reference, you get a one-day trial - if you've got the experience, the speed and the know-how, then the job is yours."

It is not unusual for top London restaurants to pay only £2 an hour - less than a basic wage at McDonald's - but tips can bring a weekly wage to between £300 and £400. And although the hours may seem unsociable, few waiters simply fade home to bed after an evening on the floor.

It's 1am at Mezzo. Roger, looking slightly less pristine than he did at 6pm, is clearing the last of the tables. As a drunken gaggle of businessmen stagger towards the cloakroom, Roger is busily arranging a venue to meet up with some of the other waiters. At 1am the night is over for the restaurant. For Roger, with his tips in his pocket and Soho outside the door, the night is still young.

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I'm paranoid. I admit it. Looking a gift horse in the mouth isn't enough for me. I have to shine a torch in its ears, prod its feet with a stick and lift its tail up. Ideally I'd like a CT scan of its whole body, plus tissue samples of all major organs for analysis. I don't trust anything any more: if I plant a seed I have to dig it up to check the roots are growing; if there's a loose thread I have to pull it. So although my Very Nice Chap (VNC) may be keen on me when he gets up in the morning, he could have developed a violent dislike of me by 20 past 10. I just don't see any reason why such disasters, having happened once, should not happen again.

I realise that this may make me impossible to live with, so when I see a loose thread sticking out of our happy ending I sit on my hands. I don't pull it at public. I wait until I go for my daily run, then I yank and worry at it, so that, by the time I get back to the house, I've unravelled my whole life, and I have to spend 10 minutes up the apple tree deep-breathing before I can go inside, and face the "Goodbye and thanks" note that will be pinned to my computer screen.

No matter how many times I wind it up and weave it back



### BELOVED AND BONK

#### Diary of a divorce

in again there's one particular strand that always sticks out: that's the fact that I am eight years older than VNC, an amount you can't ignore (although after his birthday it'll be just seven years, which is only two years more than five, which is almost nothing).

It's not the fact that society doesn't like age difference that way round, the woman older than the man, that bothers me. Because in my personal society of friends and acquaintances it's fine, and quite common for women to have younger partners.

"You're at your peak," my buddies say, "stop worrying. Hah! Maybe. But the trouble with peaks is that they have a bloody steep slope on the other side. All VNC has to look forward to with me is everything sinking into a pool of cellulite."

But it's not the drooping and the crow's feet that worry me so much. After all, I can do things to hold them off a bit, keep running six miles and slapping on the cold cream. No, it's reproduction that really gets me twitching. VNC being young but sensible isn't

## Can you write the story of the year for six to nine year olds?

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This week, Sebastian Faulks, author of *Birdsong*, *The Girl at the Lion d'Or* and *Charlotte Gray*, to be published later this year, tells Nicole Veash why the story is one of the writer's greatest weapons.

This year's judging panel includes:

THE INDEPENDENT  
Story of the Year 6  
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The Independent's editor, Andrew Marr, and columnist Suzanne Moore, leading TV scriptwriter Tony Jordan, librarian and children's literature expert Trish Botten, Scholastic Children's Books Editor Director Anne Finniss and publishing director David Fickling.

Sebastian Faulks



bits in and pulling hits out. Some things just don't work and you should always be prepared to cut things out.

I like to start writing just slightly before I am ready because it makes me feel anxious, which then makes my imagination work more intensely. I usually continue with some research while writing. I don't really make that the time I was 15 the idea of writing had formed in my head. If I was to take one book with me to a desert island it would have to be *Proust's A la recherche du temps perdu*.

My wife usually reads aloud to my children, because I find most children's books ghastly, as I did when I was younger. My daughter, who is five, is at that Secret Seven age, while my son, who is seven, loves Greek myths and biblical stories. I think he is excited by their sense of grandeur, which goes far beyond the usual Janet and John.

I wrote a number of books when I was in my 20s but none were any good. By the time I was 30, however, I had gone through that important trial and error process.

I start by choosing themes I want to write about and the narrative's purpose is to exemplify those themes. The characters then have to be people capable of enacting the plot. Ideas, story, character, in that order, although it is not always as clear-cut as that, of course. Sometimes you get a house or a person early on. Then it's a question of putting

The other weapons include theme, atmosphere and character. Characters develop through interaction with other characters. Real people in novels don't ring true because they belong to the real world and not the fictional one you are creating. There are no courses out there to teach you how to write. You have to be extraordinarily bloody-minded.

### COMPETITION RULES

Story of the Year 6 offers a £2,000 prize for the winner, with £500 each for two runners up. The top 10 stories will be published in an anthology by Scholastic Children's Books. You are invited to submit stories of 1,500-2,500 words which must arrive on or before 28 February 1998 to: PO BOX 2302, LONDON E14 5AP. A maximum of one entry and one envelope must be made by the writer, not on his/her behalf. Entries must be typewritten, double-spaced and on one side of the paper only. We will not accept stories with illustrations. Manuscripts will not be returned, so please keep a copy. All entries must be unpublished, but published writers may enter with new material. Each entry must be submitted with both a cover page and the story on a separate page. The first page must feature the title of the story, the author's name and telephone number. The title page must feature only the title of the story. The story should start on a new page, and the author's name must not feature on any of these pages, so all entries can be judged anonymously. The winning story will be published in *The Independent* subsequent to the final judging of the competition which concludes on 22 May 1998. The top three stories and up to 10 others will be

published in the autumn. In the anthology *Story of the Year 6* by Scholastic Children's Books.

The competition is not open to employees of, or relatives of employees of Scholastic or News paper Publishing plc or anyone connected with the competition. Proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of entry. No correspondence will be accepted for entries which are delayed, damaged, mislaid or wrongly delivered. The Judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Entry grants to Scholastic Ltd the exclusive right to publish an entrant's story in all forums throughout the world for the full legal term of copyright. A copy of the form of the contract may be obtained on application to the competition manager, who will be bound by the terms of the agreement to be bound by the terms of the agreement if called upon to do so. Any story chosen for publication in the anthology that does not win one of the top three cash prizes will receive a fee of £200. Any entry not submitted in the form specified will be deemed invalid. If your story is not published in the anthology or in the newspaper by the end of December 1998, these rights revert to you. Entry into this competition implies acceptance of these rules.

embryos implanted in him, just like Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Junior*. Although that does depend on nobody mistaking the mixture for the last bit of vanilla ice cream or leaving the freezer door open by accident and there being no substantial power cuts for the next 10 years.

2) I can get immensely fat, so that no one will notice that I'm pregnant. When the nine months is up, I just slip off to the shops one afternoon and have the baby. I smuggle it home among the cereals and strawberry yoghurts and install it in a cosy corner of the chicken shed, where I and the chicks raise it in secret. Then, in 10 years' time, when VNC looks at my raddled body and bemoans his lack of foresight in not having children, I just run down the garden and say, "Here My Darling, meet your son Bantam Boy."

Yeah, okay. So maybe there isn't anything I can do. I should have learnt that from experience. I didn't predict my divorce and couldn't do anything constructive to prevent its inevitability. So gather rosebuds, sing songs and enjoy happy endings because tomorrow you may be mown down by a skateboarding Chicken Child.

— Stevie Morgan

ite the  
year for  
year olds?

INDEPENDENT  
Story of the Year 6

Andrew  
Suzanne Moore,  
Tony Jordan,  
Tina Bell, Linda  
Saville, Anne  
Finnis  
David Fickling

## What Lagerfeld knows and Galliano knows not

'Galliano the glorious?' 'Galliano the genius?' 'No. Let's try 'John the deluded'. British hosannas for his Paris couture show beggar belief. But by all means find two cheers for Alexander McQueen. Then forget little England and do homage to Karl Lagerfeld, the old master who, writes Tomlin Blanchard, made a couture collection as a couture collection should be. Photographs by Andrew Thomas.

If a modern composer insisted upon harking back to the manuscripts of Beethoven or Mozart, the music fraternity would laugh them out of the concert hall. But when a modern fashion designer remakes the clothes of the Twenties masters of couture, Lanvin, Erté and Paul Poiret, he is given a standing ovation.

On Monday afternoon in the ornate salons of the grand Opera house, John Galliano gilded the works of the great designers of the pre-First World War period. The collection was "a poetic tribute to the Marquise Casati ... an Italian lady from the beginning of this century".

According to the programme notes, the Marquise "transformed her life into an oriental tale, in a Venetian palace surrounded by monkeys". She was a friend of Leon Bakst, the artist who designed costumes for the Ballets Russes. The entire collection was in homage to a woman whose life was one long orientalist indulgence, dancing tangos and collecting costumes.

Had this show been transported back in time 90 years, the Marquise would no doubt have ordered every sumptuous piece, from the fabulous orange bead-encrusted cocoon opera coat to the Joan of Arc silver liquid chain-mail dress and the sheer tulle suit embroidered with dahlias. As it was, she had to make do with the efforts of Paul Poiret. If she had still been alive today, she would have said, "been there, seen that, worn it" and would be off shopping at Hussein Chalayan or Martin Margiela.

However, the great and the good of the fashion world paid homage to the court of Galliano as they waited for the show to commence, entertained by tango dancers who twisted each other around the opera house. If Galliano had been alive in the Twenties, he would undoubtedly have been the star designer of costumes for the Ballets Russes. But that time has past. These days the modern day equivalent of Diaghilev would be commissioning the *avant-garde* Japanese label *Comme des Garçons* to design their costumes.

No matter how hard he tries to recreate it, women today – even the ones with offshore bank accounts and private jets – do not live in period costume drama.

The news on Alexander McQueen is rather better. He has stopped wreaking havoc at Givenchy. His new collection went back to his roots of tailoring and innovative cutting. Even Hubert de Givenchy might have eaten his words if he had seen the collection, after describing McQueen's work for the house as "a disaster" last week. His opulent collection shared the week's Twenties orientalist theme, but with a sense of reality and modernity too.

Whatever you may think of these two English boys their arrival in the rarefied world of haute couture has had the effect of putting a rocket under everybody else, none more so than Karl Lagerfeld, who has a wisdom and touch that they have yet to acquire.

Who would not want to spend their millions on the collection Lagerfeld presented yesterday morning in the mirrored showrooms of the Chanel headquarters at Rue Cambon? It was simply sublime.

Where Galliano is literal, Lagerfeld, with the assistance of Galliano's ex-muse and collaborator, Amanda Harlech, is



JOHN GALLIANO FOR CHRISTIAN DIOR



ALEXANDER McQUEEN FOR GIVENCHY



KARL LAGERFELD FOR CHANEL



VALENTINO



JOSEPHUS THIMISTER

subtle and delicate. Both touched on the Twenties tango theme, but Chanel's black net tiered tango dress with pink silk flowers hand-sewn on the skirts was light and elegant.

The weight of the fabrics – heavy satin folded easily into floppy skirts, boucle wool made into a closely tailored suit, or a beaded argyle pattern skirt – and the proportions of the clothes give the collection a true couture feel.

That every piece of clothing was touched by human hands is evident from the tiny cross-stitching sewn up the seams and along the cuffs and edges of a pistachio green wool suit, to the scalpel-fine pleats on a chiffon skirt.

Inside and out, these clothes are perfection, every attention paid to the tiniest detail in the best tradition of haute couture.

Couture is not all about fantasy and romance. A new name appeared on the schedule this season, that of the former Balenciaga designer, Josephus Thimister, who has managed to pass the strict criteria of the Chambre Syndicale, haute couture's governing body, to show his first couture collection. It

was an attempt to bring an old world up to date with a series of minimal, simple evening dresses in luxurious fabrics. Although it was a brave effort, it was almost too pared down, and easy to be valid as clothes worthy of having made to fit every millimetre of your body.

On Sunday night, Valentino, the Roman courrier, showed technically perfect suits and evening dresses that are both modern and sellable. A bright scarlet pin-tucked wool suit, a plain silk crepe suit with tiny pin-tucked pleats around the edges of the jacket and cuffs, or a white silk, crystal-strewn cocktail dress all have a valid market place.

If the sole purpose of a couture show is to sell perfume and be a glorified advertisement then the entire concept of haute couture is indeed a wonderfully poetic and fantastic sham.

However, while Chanel, Valentino and Yves Saint Laurent are still servicing a real market in the highest level of luxury clothing, haute couture and more importantly, the craftspeople, seamstresses and tailors who create it all from beginning to end by hand, deserve to thrive.



Truly, this was the son of man. But which one? Peter Hilton as Jesus in 'The Mysteries' Mark I, left (with Johnny Lodi as a Roman soldier), and in 'The Mysteries' Mark II, far left (with Joe Mydell as Satan)

Photographs:  
Ivan Kyncl (left),  
John Nathan  
(below)

# How the Mysteries lost God and found religion, man

**When you've axed Satan and exonerated the Jews for Jesus' death, how much of a mystery have you really got left? Paul Taylor investigates the RSC's latest reworking of the medieval biblical dramas.**

In the beginning there were *The Mysteries* in Stratford. And Edward Kemp, the dramaturge.

and Katie Mitchell, the director, beheld them and saw that they were good – but not good enough. If God were ever to revise His creation (in our dreams, mate) this would be the closest parallel to the arduous process that has gone on between the long opening performance of this project in March 1997 in Stratford and the premiere, tonight in The Pit at the Barbican, of the new, heavily emended London version. One might just hope, though, that God, should He ever take such a corrective course, would

be a shade more decisive. Both before and after Stratford, the Mitchell/Kemp *Mysteries* have generated a certain amount of crude publicity, of the kind – only more so – that any modern staging of these medieval plays tends to attract. For example, every four years, like the World Cup and the Olympics, the York Cycle of Mystery Plays comes round, presented by a large community of amateurs – the approximate equivalent of the craft guilds which originally mounted these biblical dramas. And, every four years, there's some slightly cooked-up news angle on the casting of the Deity. In 1988, the talking point was that Jesus was played by a professional Hindu star actor, brought across from India. In 1996, the chattering classes got their chasubles in a twist over the assigning of the role of God the Father to a matronly, very middle-class white woman. It was an ambiguous blow, that, for positive discrimination. In terms of sexual equality, getting a turn to play the vengeful being who creates a species

and then helpfully equips it with the freedom to be damned for all eternity must be judged as a case of having to take the rough with the smooth.

The Mitchell/Kemp *Mysteries* found themselves fodder for the news pages on account of their towering political correctness. Not so much BC as PC, the original version was ecumenical to a fault, or to the point of it being a hit of a mystery why the project was called *The Mysteries*.

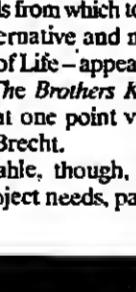
Unprepared to let mankind off the hook by dumping sin and

particular - have always been formed by an almost religious intensity, and ensemble work of almost dedication. At the less showing, this bore, I felt, particularly beautiful fruit in the production's depiction of Jesus' ministry. The disciples in *The Gospels According to St. Mark* I were involved in and with Christ with such a total, rapt yet realistic attention that the show, in one sense, didn't need an audience. Paradoxically, that pulled you in, when it worked. The trouble was: it often didn't.

uring read a draft of the version, I'm left wondering whether there's another hang-up in a sense that this work is collective. To get the de-  
signing, Kemp held "sur-  
veys with the actors and roped in adapted material from  
sources as Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* and the  
poetry of Rilke. His Satan - who  
is wild about human beings -  
is first place because he  
thinks they are going to screw

keen that he should not arouse  
faith by the demeaning stunt of  
performing miracles ("the mir-  
acle is a chain for a slave"), their  
homeless beggar Jesus comes  
over as a cross between Sher-  
lock Holmes or maybe Cracker  
(he can deduce a lot, spookily,  
from the things he notices about  
people) and a rather irritating  
social worker. He is both God  
and man, but, according to  
these plays, the god-in-man in  
all people is what we should be  
striving to locate and to act  
upon. "For me," argues Kemp,  
"it's important that the play  
ends with, on the one hand,  
Mary Magdalene saying that we  
can all be God and make some-  
thing that is good and Peter go-  
ing off and killing himself."

they are going to screw up" and who, in this regard, is the figure who gives the seeds from which to develop an alternative and more meaningful Tree of Life – appears to read *The Brothers Karamazov* and at one point quotes Brecht. It is arguable, though, that the project needs, particularly



A high-contrast, black and white portrait of a man with short, light-colored hair. He is wearing a military-style uniform with a high standing collar. The image is grainy and appears to be a photocopy or a scan of an older photograph. The man is looking slightly to his right.

**'From a publicity point of view, Kemp is dream material. His father is a bishop; his grandfather was a bishop. He too seems to have the bishop gene: all gas and T-shirt'**

inding together". The long four-month rehearsal process had clearly bound this company together. And there's a parallel in that, for, as Edward Kemp now muses, in order for that spirit to be sustained, "you would need to be working in the conditions that Peter Brook works in, so that you have an ensemble that have actually given their lives to do only this sort of work the whole time." While the RSC is the one company in Britain where Mitchell and Kemp could have created this piece, it is also a rep where visitors are needed for other shows. *The Mysteries*, it appears, was a hard piece for performers to come back to. There wasn't enough text to keep it resilient and, as a result, ularly with the new "Jesus, Our Contemporary" slant, is the ruthless egotism of the single artistic vision. For example, Dennis Potter's Jesus in *Son of Man* has more than a smack of Dennis Potter in his scathing, pain-wracked, anti-establishment manner. A long roster of writers, from Gore Vidal to Jim Crace, have recently re-made the Bible story in their own creative image and likeness. Or people have done bits of it. Harrison Birtwistle, it's rumoured, is setting the Last Supper to music. Neil Bartlett, in *The Seven Sacraments of Nicolas Poussin*, inserted himself – a gay, late-20th-century man – into the very non-gay sacramental scheme of things and threw up fascinating anomalies and coquettishness.

written by Milton's Satan or the Pontius Pilate of *The Master and Margarita* (who, with adjustments, features in the piece). The project also furnishes, as Kemp points out, an example of how, in this country – as opposed to, say, Russia or the Paris of Peter Brook – you have to start marketing something before you know what it is you'll end up with. That they are still working out what it is they have got could communicate itself to an audience as excitement or as self-bewilderment. The charge that they are patronising the past, in the cats and in the desire to offend somebody, can be avoided if the production feels like a healing enrichment of its own present – as it certainly did at that press showing in Stratford. *The My-*

ere were even audibility problems.

Debate may have raged in the rehearsal room, but it didn't go stage. The re-write is partly an attempt to remedy that. There are hangovers from the original (the title, the episodic

showing in Stratford. *The Mysteries*, though, is now more than ever a misnomer, and that's the Gospel truth.

*The Mysteries* (five and a half hours, incl two intervals) opens at 5pm tonight in *The Pit*, Barbican Centre, London EC2. Booking: 0171-638 8891.

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## 17/OBITUARIES

## Peter Diamond



Peter Diamond, arts administrator; born Berlin 8 June 1913; Private Secretary to Artur Schnabel 1934-39; Assistant Director, Netherlands Opera 1946-48; General Manager, Holland Festival 1948-49, Artistic Adviser 1965-73; Director, Edinburgh International Festival 1965-78; Hon CBE 1972; Artistic Adviser, Orchestre de Paris 1976-98; Artistic Adviser, Teatro alla Scala, Milan 1977-88; Director and General Manager, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra 1978-81; Director, Paris Mozart Festival 1981-87; married 1948 Maria Curcio (marriage dissolved 1971), second Sylvia Rosenberg (one son; marriage dissolved 1979); died Amsterdam 16 January 1998.

Peter Diamond was one of the 20th century's most effective art patrons and the personification of the Edinburgh Festival in the years 1965 to 1978, when he directed it with a far-sighted, wide-ranging view of what the world of culture had to offer Edinburgh.

An Austrian born and educated in Berlin, where he studied law, he was obliged to flee from Nazi Germany in the early 1930s and found work in Amsterdam with Artur Schnabel, then one of the world's most famous pianists. During the Second World War he survived a Dutch concentration camp, and went on to play his role as an arts administrator in Amsterdam.

Like the Edinburgh Festi-

val's first director, Sir Rudolf Bing, Diamond was imbued with the spirit of those who wished to see post-war Europe revitalised by its cultural heritage. Without his firm and fearless control of the festival, it might not have survived the long period of testing it endured from a hostile tabloid press, and insensitive bureaucracy including a festival council dominated by town councillors with little experience of the arts.

Diamond's predecessor, the Earl of Harewood, had given the festival a sense of new beginnings, but the four years of his directorship, 1961-65, had been fraught with trials and tribulations. When Diamond appeared there was an atmosphere of doubt and despondency among those who wished to see the festival accept the challenge of the Sixties.

The festival's committee had chosen Diamond as the most experienced arts administrator in Europe. He inherited the festival in its 18th year, still a fledgling institution with woefully inadequate finances, and he left it a robust 31-year-old, an inspiration to his successor John Drummond.

"The inside story of 50 Edinburgh Festivals" is the subtitle of a book, *Banquo on Thysdays*, published last summer to coincide with the festival's 50th anniversary. Its author, Ian Crawford, was the festival's first ever publicity director, appointed when Diamond became dissatisfied with the Scottish Tourist Board's publicity methods. Crawford's nine chapters each bear the names of the festival's directors and their periods of office. Diamond alone merits two chapters. The first is entitled "Against the Odds, Fiscal and Philistine"; the second, charting the festival's development from 1973 when Jack Kain, Edinburgh's first Lord Provost, was in office, "The Phantom of the Opera House". Kain supported the dream of an Edinburgh opera

never before seen in Britain.

Taciturn and uncommunicative in his public persona, Diamond inspired love and loyalty among his friends. He was well served by his staff, and in particular by Alex Schouvaloff as his deputy director and Schouvaloff's successor, Bill Thomley. Both were given a free hand to deal with the theatre programme - I associate the Diamond years with the unforgettable productions of Japanese Noh theatre, *Orlando Furioso* and *Tadeusz Kantor's* *Circo* Theatre productions of Stanislaw Witkiewicz's master works *The Water Hen* and *Loveless and Dowdies*, never before seen in Britain.

- Richard Demarco

house, but it was not to be; despite this handicap, Diamond gave the festival what many consider its golden years of opera. In 1972 he managed to present the Deutsche Oper Am Rhein with an impossibly complex production of *Zimmermann's Die Soldaten*, on the small-scale stage of the King's Theatre. Five years later, again at the King's, there was the highly successful production of *Bizet's Carmen*, starring Teresa Berganza and Placido Domingo, conducted by a youthful Claudio Abbado.

Diamond had supported wholeheartedly the creator of Scottish Opera, Sir Alex Gibson's vision of a Scottish opera dimension in the festival programme and set them well on their way with Scottish Opera's production of *Stravinsky's Rake's Progress* in 1967. He also put his faith in Arthur Oldham to establish and conduct the Edinburgh Festival Chorus. He was always ready to support gifted musicians at the beginning of their careers. At the Holland Festival he presented Kathleen Ferrier and Benjamin Britten before they had established themselves in Britain. He was also resolute in promoting the work of avant-garde composers, particularly Pierre Boulez, and even Maurizio Kagel, who had to be more subtle in Edinburgh.

In a conversation with Ian Crawford at the 40th Edinburgh Festival, Diamond he was asked to express his views on the festival's future. He expressed his worries that the festival had done more and more to attract an undiscriminating public, as if it was quantity that mattered. "I think this is sheer nonsense," he said. "What I consider as the Edinburgh Festival is addressed to a limited audience. Without knowledge about the contents of the festival you cannot expect to attract a mass audience."

These wise words suggest that it is not enough to invest in art festivals without first investing in art education. In an age when marketing forces are driving the arts, never has the spirit of Peter Diamond been more needed.

- Richard Demarco

he was the friend who ambiguously gives John Fraser a kiss, in *Seth Holt's The Nanny* (1965) Villiers and Wendy Craig were the parents of a disturbed child left in the care of Bette Davis at her most neurotic, and in *George Sidney's Half a Sixpence* (1968) he was the snobbish father of the society girl Kipps (Tommy Steele) hopes to marry.

Other films included *Nothing But the Best* (1963), *Blood from the Mummy's Tomb* (1971), *For Your Eyes Only* (1981) and *Let Him Have It* (1991). His many television appearances included *Pigmalian* (as Professor Higgins), *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Fortunes of War* and most recently *Dance to the Music of Time*. Stage successes include the thriller *White Me a Murder* (1962), a superbly droll and highly acclaimed performance as Victor Prynne in John Gielgud's 1972 revival of Coward's *Private Lives*, starring Maggie Smith and Robert Stephens, a forceful Earl of Warwick in John Clements's 1973 production of *Saint Joan*, and prominent roles in such classics as Pirandello's *Henry IV* (with Rex Harrison), *The Way of the World* and *The Last of Mrs Cheyney*.

Having maintained a loyal home-state following, she returned to Louisiana and continued to gig regularly. Last year however, she headed back to Nashville and, knowing that she needed to re-establish herself in the city, started demoing songs for the Herb Alpert-owned publishing company Almo-Irving. She also toured the UK, headlining the annual Good 'n' Country Festival at Wrotham Heath, Kent. I had the good fortune to see her perform there and was impressed, as was the crowd, by an assured and confident set; even a pair of disruptive power cuts seemed barely to faze her and, to wild applause, she sang the final part of the Patsy Cline classic "Crazy" a cappella.

Amie Comeaux was due to return to Britain, in the company of the Scottish singer Janet Somers, later this year. - Paul Wadey

In 1955 he started a two-year period with the Old Vic Company, his roles including Trebonius in *Julius Caesar* and Bushy in *Richard II*. He made his Broadway debut in the latter role in 1956 during the Old Vic tour of the United States and Canada, then spent a year with the English Stage Company. In 1960 he made his film debut in Tony Richardson's *The Entertainer* (which also marked the screen debuts of Alan Bates and Albert Finney), and the following year made his first thriller (in a rare heroic role), *The Clue of the New Pin* (1961).

He first worked with Losey on *The Damned* (1961), and for the same director played in *Eve* (1962) and as an officer in the finely acted pacifist piece *King and Country* (1964). In Roman Polanski's *Requiem* (1965)

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A few years ago he created the role of Lord Thurlow in Nicholas Hytner's staging for the National Theatre of Alan Bennett's *The Madness of George III*, and most recently was featured as Mr Brownlow in the hit revival of *Oliver!* at the London Palladium.

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## Ivan Chambers

Ivan Chambers, bookseller; born Philippopolis, Bulgaria 20 January 1902; OBE 1970; married 1943 Kathleen Pilsbury (one daughter); died Axminster, Devon 1 January 1998.

In 1925 Ivan Chambers started work at W.J. Bryce's bookshop in Holborn, London; the shop soon moved to Museum Street, in a building belonging to Stanley Unwin, and Chambers stayed there, after the shop was bought by Bowes and Bowers, until his retirement as managing director in 1971. As a director of "the original pedigree bookshop" he was earning £500 p.a. and was refused a rise, being told, "Your reward will be in the hereafter, my dear boy." He stayed, despite having no religious convictions.

Chambers was born in 1902, in Bulgaria, where his father was working on the financial concerns of a silk-spinning factory. He returned to England as a small child and was educated at St George's Roman Catholic School, Walthamstow, although

he had been baptised into the Orthodox Church.

When he was five he caught polio and had to spend much of his childhood on his back, during which time he developed a passion for literature; he was left with a withered right arm and a left arm which he could not lift properly. "I worked on half an arm." He left school aged 14 and "thereafter I was an autodidact". His career started in a Dutch concentration camp, and went on to play his role as an arts administrator in Amsterdam.

He had a particular love of Scandinavia and the Orkneys and their literature, and had a long correspondence with the poet George Mackay Brown. Chambers spent many holidays cycling in northern Europe with his father until he married Kathleen Pilsbury, a painter, in 1943. He said of his marriage, "I was a late developer", but his withered arm had made him shy.

When Bryce made him become an associate bookseller he began to be more confident and to find his skill as a public speaker. The Second World War was

a difficult time at Bryce's: the shop had supplied schools with their books and prizes but at the outbreak of war in September 1939, many cancellers their orders and publishers were reluctant to take returns. Chambers often worked seven days a week supplying prisoner-of-war camps with hand-picked packages of books sent through the British Red Cross, as well as supplying Winston Churchill.

From 1936 until his death Chambers was a member of the



Chambers: 'personal bookselling'

Society of Bookmen. He gave evidence for the defence at the inquiry into the Net Book Agreement at the Old Bailey in 1961, was an executive on the National Book Council and Chairman of the London branch of the Booksellers Association. He was a much sought-after, witty and mannered public speaker, who had a great precision with words. When he retired, the Society of Bookmen gave a lunch in his honour, "one of the most delightful characters of the book trade", at the Criterion Restaurant, for 140 friends, colleagues and admirers.

It was through working for Chambers at Bryce's from 1967 to 1969 that I first learned about "personal bookselling": the importance of establishing relationships with customers and the exciting possibilities of introducing people with previously unknown works.

- Sarah Anderson

He retired to Axminster in Devon, where he was the voluntary curator at the local museum. Although his sight failed, his mind remained active to the end.

- Sarah Anderson

The Divisional Court quashed a suspended committal order whereby the applicant was committed to prison for nine months for failure to pay an order for £30,000 costs, and granted a declaration that the sum of £30,000 had been transferred to the bank account of the clerk to the Barnet justices on the instructions of the applicant's mother in consequence of an unlawful committal order.

In 1992 the applicant had

been convicted of offences of dishonesty, and had been ordered to pay £30,000 towards the costs of the prosecution. He had failed to make any payment under the costs order, and in September 1996 appeared before the Barnet Magistrates' Court for an enquiry as to his means. There was evidence before the justices that the applicant received £400 a month from the trustees of two discretionary trusts.

The justices found that the applicant had culpably neglected to pay the costs order, and made a suspended committal order of nine months' imprisonment to take effect if the whole amount was not paid by 4 December 1996. On 9 December the justices issued a committal warrant.

The applicant's mother had

been released. He sought orders of *certiorari* to quash the committal order and *mandamus* directing the clerk to the justices to repay £30,000 plus interest to his mother.

*Peter McGrail (Rowe and Cohen, Manchester) for the applicant; Kate Astanios (Crown Prosecution Service) for the respondent.*

**Mr Justice Garland** said that the justices could only have concluded that the applicant would be able to pay £30,000 by resorting to the discretionary trusts, and that was an error.

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With regard to the repayment of the £30,000, there was



The most English of actors: Villiers as Captain Hook with Gayle Hunnicutt in the title role in rehearsals for Peter Pan, 1979

Photograph: Hulton Getty

## James Villiers

James Michael Hyde Villiers, actor; born London 29 September 1933; married 1966 Patricia Donovan (marriage dissolved 1984); 1994 Lucy Jex; died Arundel, West Sussex 18 January 1998.

begging Colchester Repertory to take him on in any capacity whatever and being heartbroken when they refused) and at prep school he gained a reputation as their best actor.

After training at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, where he formed lifelong friendships with fellow students and cricket enthusiasts Peter O'Toole and Ronald Fraser, he made his stage debut at the Summer Theatre in Frinton as William Blor in Agatha Christie's thriller *Ten Little Niggers* (1953), and the following year made his first West End appearance with the Shakespeare Memorial Company in *Toad of Toad Hall*.

His film career flourished in the Sixties when he was a particular favourite of the director Joseph Losey, while his work in the theatre spans over 40 years. On television he achieved particular success and recognition with his portrayal of Charles II (to whom he bore a strong resemblance) in the series *The First Churchills*.

Born in London in 1933, Villiers (pronounced Villers) was proud of his aristocratic lineage (his family tree goes back to the Duke of Rockingham). He was brought up in Shropshire and later at Ormeley Lodge in Richmond, more recently the home of James Goldsmith, and educated at Wellington College. He had, however, become stagestruck as a child (his brother John recalls Villiers as a boy

He first worked with Losey on *The Damned* (1961), and for the same director played in *Eve* (1962) and as an officer in the finely acted pacifist piece *King and Country* (1964). In Roman Polanski's *Requiem* (1965)

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## A spelling lesson for undergraduates: our words are our bond



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### Access to abortion

Sir: Contrary to the assertion given in your editorial of 20 January, the Abortion Act of 1967 has not ensured that abortion is generally available to women. Whether a woman can obtain an early abortion frequently depends on her doctor's view and where she lives.

We receive calls every day from distressed women whose doctors have refused to refer them for an abortion on the basis of the doctor's personal interpretation of the law or moral objection to abortion.

It is also apparent from government figures that it is far more difficult to get an abortion in some parts of the country than others. The inequality ranges between Northumberland, where nine out of ten abortions are paid for by the NHS, to North-west Lancashire, where the figure is fewer than three in ten.

Frank Dobson's statement that it should be made easier to obtain an early abortion is strongly supported by the Family Planning Association. We wish to see the law changed to allow abortion on request in the first three months of pregnancy. Women will continue to need abortions, so it is essential to ensure that these can take place as early as possible.

ANNE WEYMAN  
Chief Executive  
Family Planning Association  
London N1

Sir: Frank Dobson told BBC television news on 19 January that he believes in easier access to earlier abortions because early abortions are "less upsetting mentally".

Is this what we have come to? Right is something we feel good about, and wrong is something we feel upset about?

Making abortions easier does not make abortion right. What we need to consider is not whether abortion is emotionally acceptable, but whether it is morally acceptable.

HUGH J THOMSON  
Consultant Surgeon  
Birmingham

Sir: Under clause 2 of the 1967 Abortion Act a woman has to persuade her doctor that continuation of the pregnancy would be of significant risk to her physical or mental health. It is not the doctor's role to enforce personal moral inclinations on the patient, but simply to satisfy himself that sufficient

maturity of thought has brought about the decision. The moral responsibility of the decision lies with the mother.

Sadly some of the medical profession feel that their own moral conviction should be enforced on the patients and refuse access to this treatment. Others feel that the NHS should not carry the cost of this service, but the majority of us know their own minds and can assess better than anyone else whether continuing a pregnancy is sensible or not.

Why then treat them like children and demand they get permission from doctors? We don't need permission from doctors to have other operations we addressed at request.

Frank Dobson's efforts to streamline the process for women are common sense and show he has a depth of understanding of both the doctor's and the mother's dilemma.

DR KIERAN McCORMACK  
London W6

Sir: Presumably Frank Dobson is "huffing and puffing" about abortion (leader, 20 January) because he perceives a problem with existing abortion

law from the starting point of women's health needs. I agree with him. Abortion should not be seen as a moral question. Policy should simply be designed to allow for services that best meet women's needs when they are faced with unwanted pregnancy. What else makes sense?

Most women who have abortions are in their 20s and 30s. They know their own minds and can assess better than anyone else whether continuing a pregnancy is sensible or not. Why then treat them like children and demand they get permission from doctors? We don't need permission from doctors to have other operations we addressed at request.

ELLIE LEE  
Canterbury

Sir: Rather than making abortion easier, Mr Dobson should be promoting adoption as a positive alternative. There are thousands of couples who would give a good home to the babies who are being needlessly killed.

For the mother as well, going through with the pregnancy and having the baby adopted will be less traumatic in the long run than an abortion, however early it may be, and however coldly clinical it may seem.

P K RAY  
London W3

Sir: In the correspondence on the danger of hikes on pavements the matter of cars on pavements has not been addressed.

Every street suffers to some degree from cars parking on the pavement. This is dangerous, illegal and selfish. We cannot let car users get away with letting us believe that they are not a danger on the pavements. Stopping bikes and cars using pavements would make them a far safer place for those who should be using them - pedestrians.

GARETH DURLING  
Otley, West Yorkshire

Amazing airport  
Sir: Martin Plimmer (ISM, 17 January) criticises Heathrow as a "Lego heap of gloomy halls and temporary buildings" and accuses the airport of "doing nothing to amaze its customers".

It is easy to sit here in 1998 and say that Heathrow was poorly planned 50 years ago, much harder to have anticipated the growth in air travel and planned to meet that growth with additional facilities.

Yet by and large this is what has been achieved at Heathrow.

With investment in new facilities at Heathrow now running at more than £1m a day no wonder there is evidence of construction taking place. We have not yet found a way to refurbish our terminals invisibly, but we have found a way to do this vital work and still keep the world's busiest international airport operating smoothly.

ROGER CATO  
Managing Director  
BAE Heathrow

The world would be poorer if pigs could only be found in zoos. It is because we can make good use of sausages and ham that some of us can enjoy their company, sense of humour and inventiveness in gamesmanship, and admire the nests they build for their twice-yearly accouchements.

There may be many like myself who steer clear of pubs at present in order to avoid breathing carcinogens and having our clothes stink for days afterwards. Since non-smokers are in the majority, it is quite conceivable that pub trade would increase.

DR R TAYLOR  
Kingston,  
West Sussex

### Pigs with names

Sir: Pigs are certainly "intelligent, gutsy creatures" (letter, 19 January), but I dispute that they would rather we did not eat them.

MARY HERON  
Glaistead,  
North Yorkshire

the knowledge of what someone is on about. Just as there is no one to *épater* without a bourgeoisie, so without a common language there can be no perception of originality. We need to know that accommodation has two es and two ms, not because we couldn't otherwise recognise a des res, but because spelling it that way guarantees that we all know what the discourse is about and so can register changes in use and definition.

Of course all change is not decline. "Dumbing down" is an attractive thesis for older folk and has been since the beginning of time. Yet during the past three decades large mistakes do appear to have been made in teaching practice, and in examination procedure. For Oxford does to have allowed Eng Lit students to proceed with such egregiously bad spelling says something uncomplimentary about their devotion to duty. That is uncomplimentary, not uncomplementary - the difference is worth preserving.

### First car victim

Sir: Next month sees the centenary of Britain's first fatal car crash. On 12 February 1898 Henry Lindfield, a Brighton businessman, smashed his speeding car into a tree near Purley, Surrey.

Russell Hill Road is still a dangerous, winding road. It now bears the signs "care, speed humps" and leads into the busy red route at Purley Corner.

A simple prayer vigil will be held at the site at midday on the centenary to remember all who have died on our roads over the past century, estimated at half a million people. A century after Lindfield's death, we have still not yet learnt how to tame speeding drivers.

A PORTER  
London W2

### Big as hailstones

Sir: Commenting on the association between hail and the Selby tornado, William Hartston (Weather, 16 January) expresses surprise that measurement of hailstone size is disappointingly vague. He says that "the meteorological world is clearly in great need of an official scale for hailstone measurement".

Meteorologists already use millimetres and centimetres. Phrases such as "the size of golf balls" are handy for anyone who happens to be caught in a hailstorm without a ruler; and, of course, for the news media looking for a dramatic headline.

Moreover, a hailstorm in intensity scale (from "pea" to "coconut") has been in use since 1986, when it was introduced by the Tornado and Storm Research Organisation, based at Oxford Brookes University.

DAVID PEDGLEY  
Crownmarsh, Oxfordshire

### Nothing like a dorme

Sir: Given the lack of public support for Peter Mandelson's millennium project, I would like to propose an alternative use for the Greenwich site. The millennium dome should be flipped through 180 degrees and renamed the millennium wok. The millennium could then be marked by the largest stir-fry in history, and the resulting food distributed to London's homeless, ensuring widespread popularity for the project.

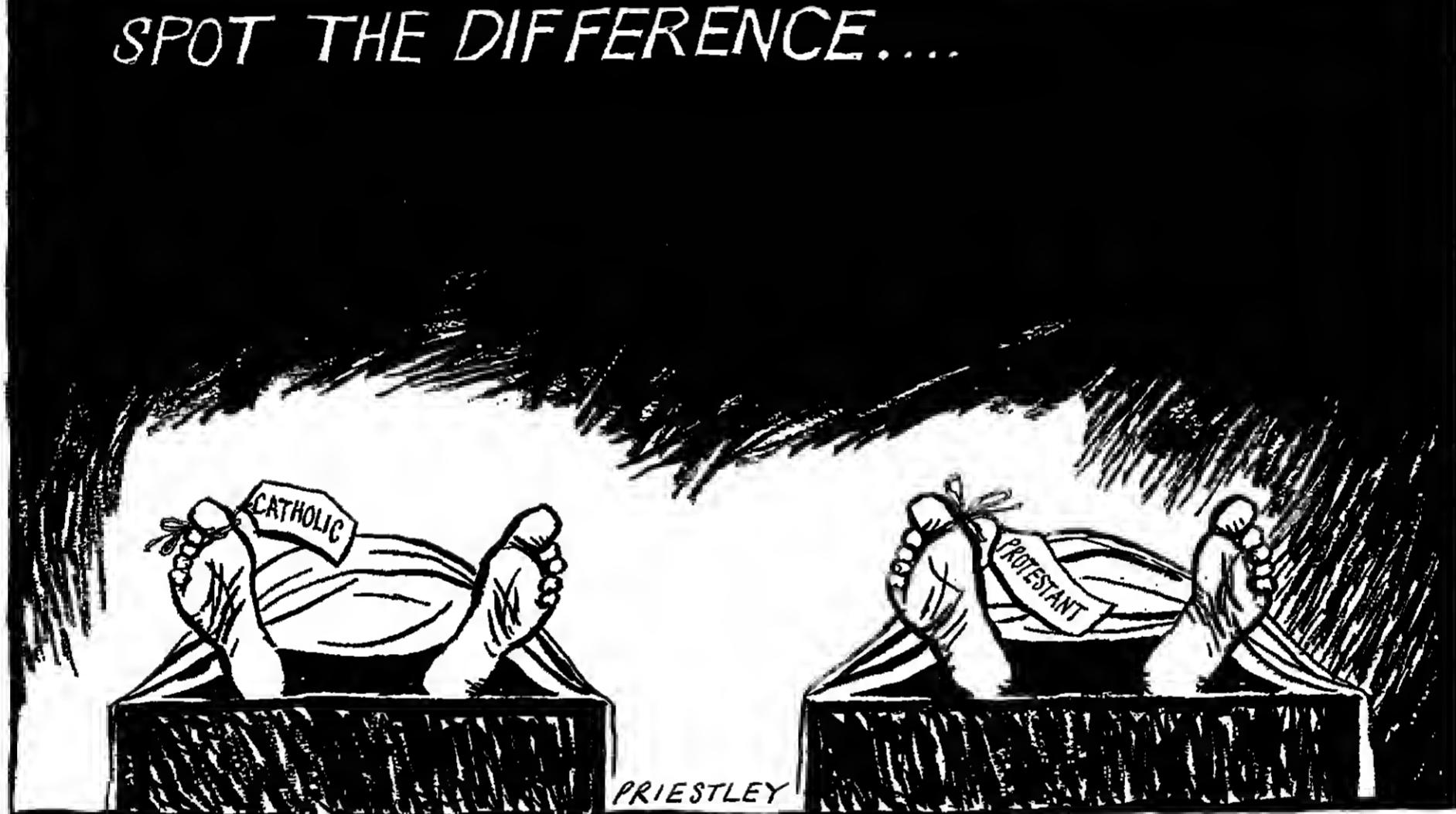
TOM PERKIN  
Canterbury

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ZANNE  
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PERSONAL  
POLITICAL

## LETTERS

### SPOT THE DIFFERENCE...



## As the rum butterers simmered, all became clear. Delia would save them



MILES  
KINGTON

"There are hard months ahead for the producers of rum butter!" cried the speaker. "Every year it is the same! Every year after Christmas the consumption of rum butter goes down! And yet we are never prepared for it! Never! Why not?"

There was a roar of agreement.

It was the annual extraordinary general meeting of the producers of that strangely British foodstuff known as rum butter. Every year we buy vast quantities of the stuff to put on our Christmas puddings, and the trade booms. Every year, in January, we stop buying it, and the trade slumps. No other country has a slump in rum butter. Well, no other country has

rum butter, come to that. Nor has any other country got Christmas pudding. There is also, if we are going to be fair about it, a rather sudden slump in the sale of Christmas puddings at the end of each December.

But there is nothing quite like the annual extraordinary general meeting that they have every year at Rum Butter House, the HQ of the producers of that strangely British foodstuff known as rum butter.

"Order, order!" shouted Lord Nugget, the chairman of the rum butter industry. "For heaven's sake, ladies and gentlemen, we cannot have these scenes every year!"

"Then do something about it!" came a shout. "Think of a plan!"

"We have thought of plans

galore!" cried Lord Nugget. "We have tried everything! We have invented a rum butter-based liqueur copied from Baileys Irish Cream! We tried to get climbers in the Lake District to rub rum butter in their leather boots! We urged their wives to rub it into their bodies! We brought out a rum butter alcopop! We persuaded the Body Shop to do tests on a rum butter cream and a rum butter shampoo! I even tried the rum butter shampoo myself! And what happened?"

"All your hair fell out!" cried the heckler.

Everyone laughed. Lord Nugget was as near bald as makes no difference. Lord Nugget himself smiled.

"You may laugh," he cried,

"but this is a serious situation. Every year in the first few months we build up huge reserves of rum butter, and sell very little of it till the climbing season starts again. What we need to do is find another use for it! Does anyone here have any ideas?"

There was a silence, broken by a voice from the crowd.

"Yes! I have an idea!"

All eyes turned. The speaker was a handsome young man with a rakish smile.

"What's your name, young man?" asked Lord Nugget sternly.

"Toby Skillet, sir. The Skillet of Blunderville." cried the speaker.

"Good luck, son," he said. "It's a dangerous mission. We all wish you well. Go with our blessing."

"Good luck, son," he said.

## Oh, how I yearn for some fire, some passion



SUZANNE  
MOORE  
THE PERSONAL IS  
STILL POLITICAL

Somewhere, possibly over the rainbow among the unicorns and the fairies, lives a far more mythical creature, the militant feminist. People talk about this creature with awe and disdain. *Patton on Newsnight* kept banging on about militant feminists and how horrible they had been to Ted Hughes over Sylvia Plath. Militant feminists were also apparently responsible for enabling women to have the abortions that so many women have every day. Militant feminists have stopped young women looking lovely and they have made a younger generation scared of identifying themselves with the F-word. The only militant feminist I remember meeting was a woman at Greenham who cut bits out of the fence and hung them around her bell. We called her Metal Mickey. God she was militant, she said that all metal was a male conspiracy and she was reclaiming its power. She was barking, and looked like Stig of the Dump. I feel somehow she is unlikely to be selected as a prospective Labour candidate, but that is their loss.

We obviously need militant feminists more than they ever needed us. The new feminism promoted in Natasha Walter's eponymous book takes a stand against much of what she claims they stood for. This is in the context of the correct but rather bland arguments she makes for equality. The criticism directed towards Walter and Naomi Wolf – basically, "Tell us something we don't already know" – does not take into account the fact that books such as this may well speak to a generation who genuinely know nothing about feminism. Walter's work is conciliatory in tone. Things should change. She doesn't know how they should change, nor why men should give up power. Perhaps she is just not angry enough: perhaps one day she will be. Perhaps anger is outmoded and militant and unattractive to men, and the new feminism is far too girly for polemical ranting and raving, but oh I yearn for passion, some fire, some energy. Where is Valerie Solanas when you need her?

Yet the attacks on Walter from some older feminists make me want to defend her, in that they are so patronising. I'd better situate myself here. I am not as young as Natasha but not as old, obviously, as someone like Germaine Greer; and while I do not know any militant feminists, I know lots of bitter and twisted ones who feel that they have never been properly acknowledged or indeed thanked by a younger generation. They may have done it all before, they may have done it more thoroughly and far better than any of us ever could, but the fact is, each generation has to make its own mistakes as well as its own manifesto.

The only argument worth having is about ideas. No one really cares about

whether women wear lipstick and shoes and revealing clothes and the like, though I am aware that there always lurks the very odd exception. No one needs permission to get dressed up as they damn well like. Let us not reduce an important argument to a purely cosmetic one.

No, what matters is Walter's central theme of separating the personal from the political. The difficulty is that, as with so many discussions of feminism, the argument is in something of a cultural vacuum. All collective politics is undergoing transformation. Walter is a moderniser of the New Labour sense of the word, hence her concern with image, inclusiveness and ultra-feel-good reasonableness. The weaknesses of the book flows from this valiant attempt to modernise the peculiarly vague version of politics that describes itself as feminist. Like the New Labour modernisers, she cannot pay enough attention to class, the institutionalisation of power and the genuine conflict that this produces.

If anyone can be a feminist – those who have rape fantasies, and white weddings, and enough money not to care – then why should anyone be a feminist? If you are not driven by a desire to eradicate the power difference between men and women, then why bother with such a dissolute and unfocused ideology?

Whereas Walter argues for a separation between the personal and political, I would argue that in many areas the opposite is happening. The gap between what is properly private and what is purely public is one we debate all the time, whether we are talking about the behaviour of politicians or the domestic division of labour. We cannot talk about feminism, it seems to me, without addressing theories of representation. Representation in both senses of the word. How are women represented culturally? And are women represented equally in positions of power?

We clearly have a long way to go on both fronts. Nor can we continue talking about feminism these days without discussing globalisation, the economic forces that are driving through fundamental changes in the workplace, or the position of an ideological movement (Walter still quaintly refers to it as a movement) in this era of post-modern scepticism. Where are the ideas about the new technologies, the position of women under fundamentalist religions, the redefining of what power might mean?

She is right that feminism has travelled down far too many blind allies concerning dress and sexuality and has become little more than therapy for some. She is wrong to maintain that the personal is only ever purely personal though sometimes it may well be. The gap between the personal and political is a social construction that works in favour of the status quo. Exposing that gap changes lives, in that it reveals that much of what is taken for granted is socially constructed. This insight above all others is what allows the possibility for change. If you do not understand that gender and sex roles and inequality do not just happen, but are created by the culture we all live in, then how do you begin to argue that they may be dismantled and remade in the image of the new model feminism? This, rather than Walter's terrific good looks, is what we should be focusing on.

It matters little whether the ideas of the new feminism are second-hand. After all second-hand clothes can be as chic as anything that is produced today. That, however, is no excuse for second rate and internalised discussion. But then I'm just an old-fashioned girl who would like my heart set aflutter, not after we've changed the world but while we are changing it.

\* What's this Asian economic crisis all about?



## What if you could talk to anyone in the world in their own language?



HAMISH  
MCRAE  
ON COMPUTER  
TRANSLATION

A couple of weeks back while surfing the Internet (yes, the 20th century has come to your household) I found that you could get it to translate from one language to another. If you use the Alta Vista search engine to find a document you will see the word "translate". Hit it and it will give you the thing in the foreign language of your choice. That is not much use for Anglophones as most of the pages on the Internet are already in English, but I saw some stuff in Spanish about a speech I had made in Buenos Aires. I wondered what they were saying about me and hit the button.

But it will all get better and I think we will get to the stage in the next decade where provided the language is kept simple, computers will routinely translate phone conversations as well as documents. We may even be able to buy pocket synthesizers that translate our words into the chosen foreign language, and then translate the reply.

If this is right, it is of seismic importance. At the moment the world is moving quite rapidly to a single common standard. English is becoming the "Windows" of the verbal world. It is already spoken by us as many non-native speakers as native. And the non-natives are developing new, simpler and more precise forms of the language than the versions we use. These versions are less rich, for they use fewer words and less complicated structures. It is, however, better than nothing, and at the moment it is free.

Voice recognition? It is there already and getting better all the time. Voice synthesis? Works fine. Translation? Coming along. In, say, 10 years' time it is quite plausible that we will be able to speak into a telephone in one language and have the words come out at the other end in another. Computer translation will do for words what the electronic calculator has done for mental arithmetic.

Well, not quite. Anyone who enthuses about new technologies has to be aware of the false promises of technology in

the past. Translation is very difficult for a number of reasons. Computers find it very hard to cope with homonyms – words which sound the same but have different meanings according to the context. They find it hard to cope with languages where the structure and grammar is completely different: for example languages (such as English) where the position of the word in the sentence, as opposed to the ending of the word, is crucial to understanding who is doing what to whom. And they are totally baffled by subtleties such as irony.

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for these goods are all built to a common standard. Cars all have their controls in the same position; the Internet has its own single global computer language. But most services still have large cultural and language differences.

For example, we would find it hard to imagine buying an insurance policy in German, or going to see a doctor who spoke only Italian. (It is bad enough trying to learn to ski in French.) The technology of the Internet, however, allows global distribution of many services: often the easiest way to buy a book is to get Amazon.com to send it, rather than having to trek down to a local bookstore and get them to order it for you – even though Amazon are operating out of Seattle.

International trade in services is growing fast, but it is still smaller than trade in goods. The parallel development of a single language standard, English, and an easy way to move in or out of that standard (computer translation) is the powerful motor that will drive the next stage of globalisation.

The future of computer translation is inextricably bound up with the future of English as a global language. At one extreme it is conceivable that computer translation might prove a bit of a blind alley, for even if it does improve radically, it will not be needed as most people who use language internationally will already speak English. At the other extreme it could conceivably make a global language unnecessary.

In reality I think its importance will turn out to be somewhere in between the two. It will buttress English as the global language by allowing people who do not speak it to use it. For others, computer translating will be used as a cross-check, rather in the way those of us with school French use subtitles when watching a French movie, getting some of our understanding from reading the translation and some from listening to the original language. It will be used by Anglophones to access material not yet available in English; and by people preparing material in minority languages to make their material available to the rest of the world.

Ultimately it will also be a democratising force in the sense that computers give ordinary people the access that hitherto was only available to the very rich or the very privileged. Take information. The Internet increasingly gives access to information that would previously be available only to a company with a large research department.

Now the same is happening with language. Go to an international conference and immensely competent translators will see that everyone understands what is going on. Watch Tony Blair in Japan on TV and you will see a translator in the background flipping what he is saying backwards and forwards, to and from his Japanese counterpart. Soon something close to this quality of linguistic competence will be available, at the push of a button, to us all.

## Adopt a tiger...



Hundreds of tigers are still being illegally slaughtered by poachers throughout Asia. Every day worldwide, two wild tigers die to satisfy an appalling trade in tiger bones and fur, often leaving behind helpless cubs to starve. We are offering you the chance to provide a secure future for an orphaned tiger.

**M**ax is a rare Indo-Chinese tiger who was orphaned as a small cub when poachers killed his mother. The illegal tiger-bone industry for Chinese medicines could push the tiger to extinction by the year 2000. Max would have perished without their mother's care but he was rescued in time and now lives in a natural habitat sanctuary in Thailand. He will always depend on human care – will you help us to help him and fund tiger conservation world-wide?

Foster Max and help provide the attention he needs, ensure other orphan cubs can be rescued and fund vital tiger protection projects. For just £14.95 (of which £10.00 is your donation), you'll receive a gift pack including:

■ A personalised certificate ■ A colour photograph of Max ■ A history of Max's background ■ A tiger fact sheet ■ An exclusive tiger T-shirt

Yes, I would like to foster Max for the person I have nominated below:	
Person nominating payment:	Postage payment
Mr/Mrs/Other/Title:	Mr/Mrs/Other/Title
Address:	Address:
Postcode:	
Please send postcard gift to: The Foster parent <input type="checkbox"/> The person making payment <input type="checkbox"/>	
I enclose a cheques/cheque for £14.95 <input type="checkbox"/> £10.00 <input type="checkbox"/> £14.95 <input type="checkbox"/> £10.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	
I enclose a credit card/cheque for £14.95 <input type="checkbox"/> £10.00 <input type="checkbox"/> £14.95 <input type="checkbox"/> £10.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	
Amount £ <input type="text"/> of the person receiving the gift pack is enclosed and £10.00 Europe £12.00 elsewhere	
Expiry Date <input type="text"/>	
For more information about Care for the Wild, please tick here <input type="checkbox"/>	
Care for the Wild, 1 Ashdale, Northgate Road, Bunting, West Sussex, BN12 4PF. Tel 01223 872590	

## Viewers to politicians: you'll just have to try harder



ANDREW  
MARR  
PARTY POLITICAL  
BROADCASTS

Party political broadcasts get under people's skin. They are infuriating. I am a political nut, and I hate them – won't watch, stomp off cursing for the five thieven minutes of the evening, and despise the whole business. Most people I've talked to feel just as strongly.

Why should this be? Party broadcasts are often boring, true; but TV and radio are packed with tedium, and we just shrug. There's always that coffee to be made or – wild thought – a book to be picked up. Sometimes the broadcasts are badly made, but so's a lot else. Yes, they are full of tawdry

propaganda; but so are the commercial commercials, and some of us have learnt to enjoy them. Isn't it better to be engaged in democratic propaganda than propaganda for the next identical-looking car?

The first problem is the very faint but repulsive whiff of coercion, the sense of Power stomping into one's living room and horing on. We have come vaguely to accept Fiat and Nissan, Currys and Homebase, as irritating television buskers, transparent mendicants: but the Conservative Party, or New Labour, or the Liberal Democrats, are somehow different – bossier and more portentous. They demand that you sit up and listen. I feel the same rush of rebellious irritation that I last felt squirming at the back of 3B when the deputy head was reading Dickens' "Cricket and the Hearth" very slowly. *Get on with it. Shh up. Go away.*

At the same time, this is clearly at some level unreasonable. The parties and their leaders matter. They ought to get their chance to speak directly to us, without the intervention of the Royal College of Spin, Michael Brunson, Robin Oakley and the rest. If we want to live in a democracy, we seem unsure quite how to use them:

First, these broadcasts are tiny, weak weapons of political war, swamped in their effect by news and current affairs, and low in impact. Second, the politicians themselves seem unsure quite how to use them: the document is radical in that the broadcasters themselves, and not the politicians, are grasping the nettle. The politicians, judging by their first reactions, are merely nerved. They shouldn't be.

One eloquent little remark in the new document is that "Many parties feel five minutes was too long" for their own broadcasts.

Overall, the broadcasters' paper is a long-overdue break from the real world. With their stagey music, would-be "frank" interviews with Dear Leaders and Common People, and plonkingly partisan analysis, these five-minute leeturets belong to another age. We are simply too knowing and inquiring to be happy with unadorned party propaganda being squirted into our living rooms, like it or not. (There is always the off switch. But any broadcasting agreement which depends on viewers using that is, by definition, a failure.)

There has been no rethink of these broadcasts for a quarter of a century but these reforms, if agreed, will themselves look redundant within a few years. The multi-channel revolution means there will no longer be any excuse for insisting that such party broadcasts go out on this, or the other station. It will become impractical to get blanked coverage for political propaganda. Will cartoon channels and sports channels be expected to carry this kind of broadcasting?

Of course not. That, at a stroke, slices away the implied coercion that has always tainted PPBs as a form of communication. *We have ways of making you watch.* Not now you don't. We are liberated by our channel-hopping thumbs.

Real choice in television changes the terms of political trade entirely. Soon, there will be politics-only channels, and then perhaps *Tory-Vision* and *Labour TV*, just as there will be channels for most other minority interests. If the smaller parties make better arguments, and have livelier spokespersons, we'll turn on to them for some fun. In the digital marketplace, there will, I hope, be a wider range of views and arguments than conventional news reporting.

You could argue that this is a Bad Thing for the common democratic culture, driving us apart, replacing citizens with self-obsessed and narrow consumers, so that one day we'll look back to the days of party political broadcasts, as we remember when the whole family gathered round for *Morecambe and Wise*. The only trouble is that we didn't watch the Party Political Broadcasts in the first place. John Major ex-

plained Tory policy on Europe isn't a likely candidate for national nostalgia.

Interest in politics won't shrivel with the demise of PPBs. News will continue to be at the heart of broadcasting strategies – because people want it – and the arrival of partisan and specialist political television will energise the democratic culture, not weaken it. Local television should, with luck, have an even more dramatic effect: if we were able to switch on and hear councillors argue about the standards in the secondary school, or the proposed demolition of a nearby shopping street, we'd be likely to be more interested in local politics than we are now.

Television and radio ought to be wonderful, fizzing political media, full of passion and argument. Most of the time, that early promise has failed to materialise; and few of the failures have been as dismal as PPBs. Rather than clinging to their right to an occasional tedious harangue, the parties should agree with the broadcasters, throw away these failed five-minutes and start thinking seriously about how to win friends and viewers in the much more interesting and challenging digital tomorrow.



Reg. Charity No. 26920

## SmithKline Beecham set for record £77bn merger with US pharmaceuticals giant

SmithKline Beecham, the UK pharmaceutical giant, yesterday revealed it was in merger talks with American Home Products, in a move which could lead to the creation of a £77bn healthcare and drugs giant. Andrew Yates in London and David Usborne in New York contemplate the prospect of the biggest deal ever seen in corporate history.

SmithKline Beecham, the UK pharmaceutical giant, yesterday revealed it was in merger talks with American Home Products (AHP) would create a powerhouse in the drugs industry. With annual turnover of more than £16bn, including almost £9bn of prescription drug sales, the combined group would become the biggest pharmaceuticals group in the world ahead of Novartis of Switzerland, Merck of the US and Glaxo Wellcome of the UK.

The City was betting last night that a merger was likely to be sealed within the next few weeks. "They have been talking to each other for some time and a deal looks near," said one source "close to the talks."

Rumours of a bid on Wall Street have seen SmithKline's shares rise more than 80p since Friday but, after early gains again yesterday, they closed down 3p at 740p. But in New York, news of the talks sent the value of AHP soaring. By lunchtime on Wall Street, the shares were trading at \$90, up almost \$10 from the opening bell. The combined group would now be worth about £77bn.

The merger talks were prompted by the huge cost savings that would result from a partnership. Analysts believe SmithKline and AHP could slash costs by £1.5bn by the year 2000 by using each other's sales and distribution networks.

The two groups could also increase expenditure earmarked for researching and developing drugs to more than £1.5bn a year, one of the biggest budgets in the industry and well ahead of the likes of Glaxo Wellcome and Novartis.

One analyst said: "This will put the combined group in the top flight in terms of expenditure on new drugs which they were not ready before. That is vital for their future."

Shares in drug companies around the world soared in anticipation of further consolidation in the industry. Glaxo Wellcome shares rose 30p to 166p and the bid spotlight once again fell on Zeneca whose price jumped 60p to 2357p.

Robin Gilbert, drugs analyst at Panmure Gordon, said: "There has been a lapse in mergers ... but now it's party time again. Everyone will be

looking at their options again."

A spate of corporate activity throughout the industry in the mid-1990s culminated in the formation of giant drugs group such as Glaxo Wellcome. However since Novartis came into being with the merger of Swiss groups Sandoz and Ciba-Geigy in 1996 there has been a dearth of big deals.

"As each merger takes place,

it just ups the stakes for the next one," commented one US analyst. "A lot of people behind closed doors today will be figuring out what they will need to do if this goes through. There will be a lot of discussion of new mergers in that industry."

"This is an ongoing scenario," said Avend Desai, whose firm Orthimed Advisor, tracks the pharmaceutical industry worldwide. He pointed out that even as the world's largest player, a combined SmithKline and AHP would still have slightly less than 6 per cent of global market share. "That is a lot less than you see the leaders capturing in other industries".

Analysts agree, that with stock market prices of drug's groups escalating, agreed mergers are now deemed much more likely than hostile takeover bids.

If SmithKline and AHP merge, the new group is likely to be listed in the US. "With most of the business in North America it would make sense to relocate over there," said one industry source.

SmithKline makes some of the best known healthcare products in the world including Beecham's cold remedies, Panadol pain killers Aquafresh toothpaste and Nicorette patches for smokers determined to kick the habit. The group's best selling prescription drugs include Seroxat, the anti-depressant which is sold as Paxil in the US and is the group's answer to Prozac, and antibiotic Augmentin.

With a market value of around £36bn, AHP is the third largest US pharmaceuticals group behind Merck and Bristol Myers Squibb. Worldwide, it is already sixth in the pharmaceutical rankings. It is also the supplier of some of the best-known – and most lucrative – products in the American market. These range from over-the-counter consumer medicines such as the pain-killer Advil and Preparation H (a haemorrhoids cream) to prescription drugs like the hormone replacement drug Premarin.

City observers agreed that SmithKline's and AHP's products were a good fit. One industry analyst said: "There is a good overlap in therapeutic drugs. Both groups also have complementary vaccines business with AHP specialising in child products and SmithKline in adult vaccines."



### SmithKline Beecham

SmithKline Beecham's history can be traced back to 1849 when Thomas Beecham opened the world's first drug making factory. The group soon became known for its laxative pills and later cold remedies. As Beecham expanded it added a string of products from Luccozide, the health drinks, to Bylcreem, a hair cream made famous by legendary cricketer Dennis Compton. The foundations for the present day drugs giant were formed when Beecham completed its own Anglo-American merger, teaming up with SmithKline Beckman in 1998. The US group had been transformed in the 1970's after it discovered Tagamet, a drug used to treat ulcers. However poor results from its research and development program and acquisitions saw it fall prey to Beecham. Since then SmithKline Beecham has pulled off a number of large acquisitions which have made it one of the biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world, including the \$2.9bn purchase of Sterling Winthrop's drug business from Kodak in 1995.

However some analysts believe SmithKline's move was more to do with securing a larger product pipeline rather than simply cutting costs. One said: "We predict that SmithKline's earnings growth will begin to dip with Augmentin going off patent by 2003. This is all about giving SmithKline a wider range of products."

A merger would solve the management succession problems at AHP. Chairman John Stafford has been seriously ill and Fred Hassan, the director who was favourite to replace him, left the group last year to become chief executive at rival Pharmacia & Upjohn.

However, there are several clouds on AHP's horizon that may be weakening its hand in the talks with SmithKline. Among these is the threat of competition for the first time to its highly lucrative Premarin drug – a name derived from its primary ingredient, pregnant mare's urine – which it first patented in 1942.

Premarin is used by some 8 million American women, most

ly for post-menopausal hormone replacement and to combat osteoporosis. On its own, this drug has earned AHP roughly \$1bn a year. However, new drugs of the same type may soon be on the market from Merck.

Perhaps worse for AHP, however, is the gathering onslaught of class-action lawsuits filed against it and some of its executives stemming from its decision, under intense government pressure, to withdraw from sale two leading dieting drugs, Redux and Pondimin.

The two drugs manufactured by Wyeth-Ayerst, were commonly used in the now discredited diet cocktail known as Fen-Phen. They were withdrawn after research demonstrated that they could cause potentially fatal complications including an unusual hardening of the heart valves and pulmonary hypertension.

Among the lawsuits is one

filed by some of AHP's own shareholders who have claimed that executives at the company knew of the difficulties months before they were made public and that they sold some of their own shares in the company in anticipation of the storm that was about to break.

This month also saw the start of a first trial considering another lawsuit over Norplant, a contraceptive device that looks like matchsticks that are placed under a woman's skin in the arm. Plaintiffs argue that AHP concealed the extent of negative side-effects of the drug, including personality changes among those who take Norplant.

Even if a deal with AHP fails to materialise, few experts believe that SmithKline will remain independent for long. "If SmithKline don't do a deal with AHP then they will probably do it with somebody else," said an analyst. – *Outlook*, page 21

## HK Telecom gives up its monopoly

Hong Kong Telecommunications (HKTel), which is 54 per cent owned by Cable & Wireless, the UK telecoms giant, has abandoned its long-distance monopoly eight years ahead of schedule in exchange for a one-off compensation package worth HK\$6.7bn (£531m) and a package of measures which should boost its revenue from other sources.

The deal concluded with the Hong Kong government marks the end of an era for Cable & Wireless, which used to be the monopoly telecommunications supplier for the British Empire. Hong Kong was its last remaining monopoly in any country where open markets and laissez-faire economics prevail. The former British colony's telephone network monopoly, due to expire in 2006, will give way to competition in the provision of international network services as early as 1 January 1999.

Stephen Vines, Economic Services, said: "Before this agreement, our external telecommunications sector was

out of line with the best current international practice, and this has had adverse implications for our regional competitiveness in telecommunications."

HKTel is the largest contributor to Cable & Wireless' balance sheet. In the company's latest returns, for the half year to September 30 1997, Hong Kong accounted for over one-third of global turnover and two-thirds of the operating profit.

HKTel has already lost its domestic telephone monopoly. Three new fixed-line companies now compete in this sector. Meanwhile, a host of companies has launched cut-rate overseas phone services, which pass through the Hong Kong Telecom gateway, in return for a fee but are eating away at the frayed monopoly supplier's business.

As well as the cash payment, which will be made in two parts, HKTel will cease making royalty payments to the government, which last year totalled about £42m.

– Stephen Vines

## Anger over cuts in pension subsidies

The Government was yesterday attacked for slashing subsidies for company pension schemes in a move that could cut the retirement incomes of tens of thousands of members by up to 30 per cent. As Andrew Verity reports, the decision is predicted to kill off thousands of money purchase pensions run by small employers.

John Denham, the DSS pensions minister, announced cuts to pension rebates, the subsidies given to people who give up Serps, the State earnings related pensions scheme, by at least 11 per cent.

Hundreds of thousands of

members of money purchase schemes, which include large companies such as WH Smith, previously received a minimum rebate from the taxman worth 3.1 per cent of their salary. From next April, these rebates will be slashed by 0.9 points to 2.2 per cent.

For every £100 of subsidised pension which a young member could previously expect, he or

she can now expect just £71, according to figures from Scottish Equitable, the life insurer. Older members will also see the subsidised pension cut by at least 11 per cent.

The decision will anger a pensions industry already smarting from the July decision to abolish the dividend tax credit paid to pension schemes, which was expected to lower pension benefits by at least 10 per cent.

Bill Birmingham, benefits officer at the National Association of Pension Funds, said: "This will hit members, who will effectively now have a lower pension. A drop of 0.9 per cent will mean 9

per cent less income in retirement."

The cuts have astonished

pension experts because they are accompanied by a sharp hike in subsidies for personal pensions, repeatedly criticised by the Government as expensive.

Personal pensions will receive a rise in rebate of 0.4 points to 3.8 per cent – giving personal pension holders 7.2 per cent more than members of group schemes. The cost to the Treasury is approximately £160m a year, based on DSS figures.

Members of final salary schemes will receive the same rebate as before, despite criticism following the Budget that this was too little.

Meanwhile, the Government is expected to announce plans within weeks that Lloyd's of London will be regulated in future by the new Financial Services Act due to be published this summer. "We assume there will be a ministerial announcement before the end of the month," said David Gittings, director of the Lloyd's regulatory division.

A damaging reference in the Board's annual report says: "It is noticeable that many of the offences arose as a result of a lack of understanding of accepted business practice and the requirements of civil law."

– Terry Macalister

## Lloyd's strict regime brings increase in disciplinary cases

A programme of "zero tolerance" against practitioners inside Lloyd's of London has led to a massive increase in formal disciplinary proceedings, the insurance market's internal regulators said yesterday.

But the Lloyd's Regulatory Board admitted the market still needed to re-establish its full credibility after devastating financial losses and was still 12 months away from best UK corporate practice.

More than 60 formal warnings were handed out to brokers, underwriters or agents while 19 practitioners were found guilty of misconduct.

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– Terry Macalister

www.bloomberg.com

source: Bloomberg

Leschly: tough competitor at work and play

If Jan Leschly succeeds in a bid to create the world's largest healthcare group, his commercial prowess could finally eclipse his other great successes: on the tennis courts.

The 57-year-old chief executive of SmithKline Beecham was ranked tenth in the world at tennis 30 years ago. He played 16 consecutive Wimbledon tournaments and was a regular choice for his native Denmark in the Davis Cup.

Mr Leschly works at business like he played tennis: to win. Outspoken and fiercely competitive, he has been deeply influenced by the US where he now officially lives with his family.

Although educated with a pharmacy degree and MBA from university in Copenhagen, Mr Leschly joined the US-based pharmaceutical group, Squibb Corporation, where he quickly climbed the corporate ladder.

In 1990, Mr Leschly took his American-style openness and keen sense of humour to SB as chairman of the group's worldwide pharmaceutical business. His enormous reserves of energy were used by the then group chief executive, Bob Bauman, to help weld together the still disparate pieces of the recently merged SmithKline and Beecham companies.

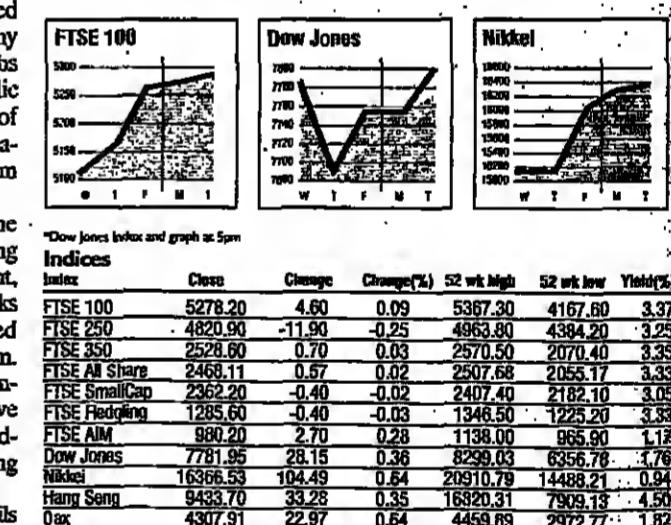
Mr Leschly succeeded Mr Bauman in April 1994 and immediately embarked on a whirlwind of activity. In a single year he completed either the sale or purchase of assets worth \$10bn (£6.1bn).

Now based in Philadelphia and also on the board of American Express, Mr Leschly has attracted little but praise for his strong corporate leadership. The only real complaint has surrounded the size of his pay packet: he earned more than £2m in 1996 which included a £1.2m bonus.

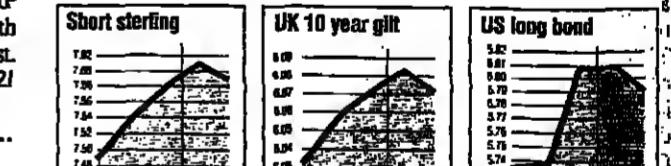
Co-operative in management style, Mr Leschly nevertheless likes to lead from the front. As one colleague remarked: "It probably comes from being the nephew of two Danish generals."

– Terry Macalister

## STOCK MARKETS



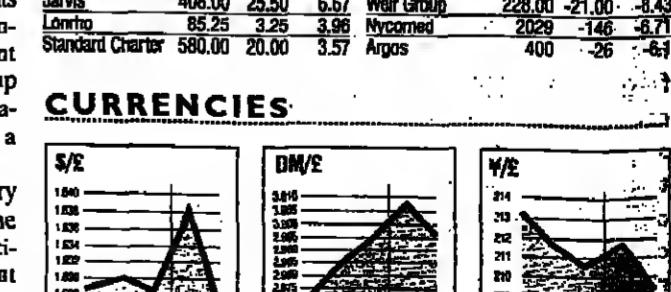
## INTEREST RATES



## MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
NYcomex	2397.00	162.00	7.25	Schroders	1550.00	-154.00	-9.0%
Aravis	408.00	25.50	6.67	Wingroup	228.00	-21.00	-8.4%
London	85.25	3.25	3.9%	Nycomed	2029	-146	-6.7%
Standard Charter	580.00	20.00	3.57	Argos	400	-26	-6.5%

## CURRENCIES



## OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change	Yield (%)
Dollar	1.0267	-1.17	-1.0844	0.6147
D-Mark	2.9566	-0.89	-2.7100	1.8422
Yen	209.34	-11.58	-196.37	128.69
£/Index	105.20	-0.10		



## Leschly on to a winner in going for an encore

### OUTLOOK ON SMITHKLINE BEECHAM'S PROSPECTIVE DEAL. THE BANK OF ENGLAND SYMPOSIUM ON EMU, AND CABLE & WIRELESS IN HONG KONG

Bigger and more ambitious still grow the consolidating mergers of industry and finance. After months of fevered stock market speculation, Jan Leschly, chief executive of SmithKline Beecham, finally admitted publicly for the first time yesterday to plans for the big daddy of them all - a prospective merger with American Home Products to form a pharmaceuticals and health care products goliath with a combined market capitalisation of £77bn. Just to put this in perspective, that's getting on for double the annual GDP of Ireland.

This is the world's most ambitious merger to date and it would be silly to try and belittle it in any way. All the same, by the end of the year we are going to have seen a lot more of these things, both domestic and like this one cross border in nature. It is all too likely that soon it will be eclipsed by something even bigger. The backdrop to this growing wave of mergers, not just in pharmaceuticals but across industries, sectors and frontiers, is well rehearsed. Globalisation, rapid technological change and a relentless pressure on managements for enhanced returns, is forcing the pace as never before.

Even so, it is somehow appropriate that it should be Mr Leschly who is out of the batch first this year. He was not the architect of the original merger between Beecham and SmithKline, but he is credited with being the one who made it work, adding hugely to shareholder value in the process. Now this tough talking Dane is intent on performing an encore. He knows how to do these things and he knows how much value they can create.

The idea that there is no room any

longer for the middle-ranked player, strongly locked into a particular domestic market, has become a bit of a business cliché. Companies have to be either the big global operator, with the distribution, spending and marketing clout to reach out to the mass markets of the world, or they must position themselves as small niche players, sniping at the soft underbelly of the international monopolists. Perhaps unfortunately, it is nonetheless true. Mr Leschly is aiming to put SmithKline Beecham firmly in the first category.

Actually what SmithKline is attempting here is not so much a quantum leap in size for pharmaceutical companies as a catching up with the market leaders. Even if Mr Leschly pulls this off, he still won't be quite as big as Merck. Nor will he be significantly larger in terms of sales and market capitalisation than Novartis, Pfizer and Glaxo Wellcome. But what he does do is achieve their economies of scale, and, just as important in this industry, their level of spend on research and development.

It is still sometimes the case that the hoffn in the end of the garden shed will stumble across some new breakthrough in medical science. The biotechs are good examples of how this random approach to the blockbuster pharmaceutical product can still work. But on the whole this is not how it is done these days. New treatments for common ailments are achieved via very costly, systematic and targeted research into particular molecular structures, compounds and substances. Moreover, the costs of bringing a promising new compound from discovery to market are generally too high for anyone but the biggest players. So size matters.

As for Britain, it would not be capable of joining in the first wave even if its political masters wanted to. Virtually no thought has yet been given or preparation made across vast swathes of British industry and commerce to introduction of the euro. Fortunately this is not the case in the City, which, judging by a symposium yesterday organised by the Bank of England for City practitioners, is relatively advanced in its preparations. The general consensus was that the City is well placed to maintain its position as Europe's leading financial centre even if Britain stays out for some length of time. And if all comes unstuck, then the City will doubly clean up. Don't just love being in control.

### City wins both ways with EMU

A year's a long time which it comes to European Monetary Union. This time last year there was still great angst among the leading exponents of the single currency, there will be no fudging of the entry conditions. The German finance minister would say at every available opportunity. This led everyone to think there was little possibility of Spain and Italy being founding members of the euro.

With the euro less than a year away, nobody bothers too much about that sort of thing any longer. The Euro now seems to be open to all in the first wave, apart from maybe Greece, which really would be a fudge too far. This makes the single currency both a more credible thing, in the sense that it promises to take in most of Europe immediately, and a more dangerous one, in the sense that it will as a result also be more unstable and open to attack.

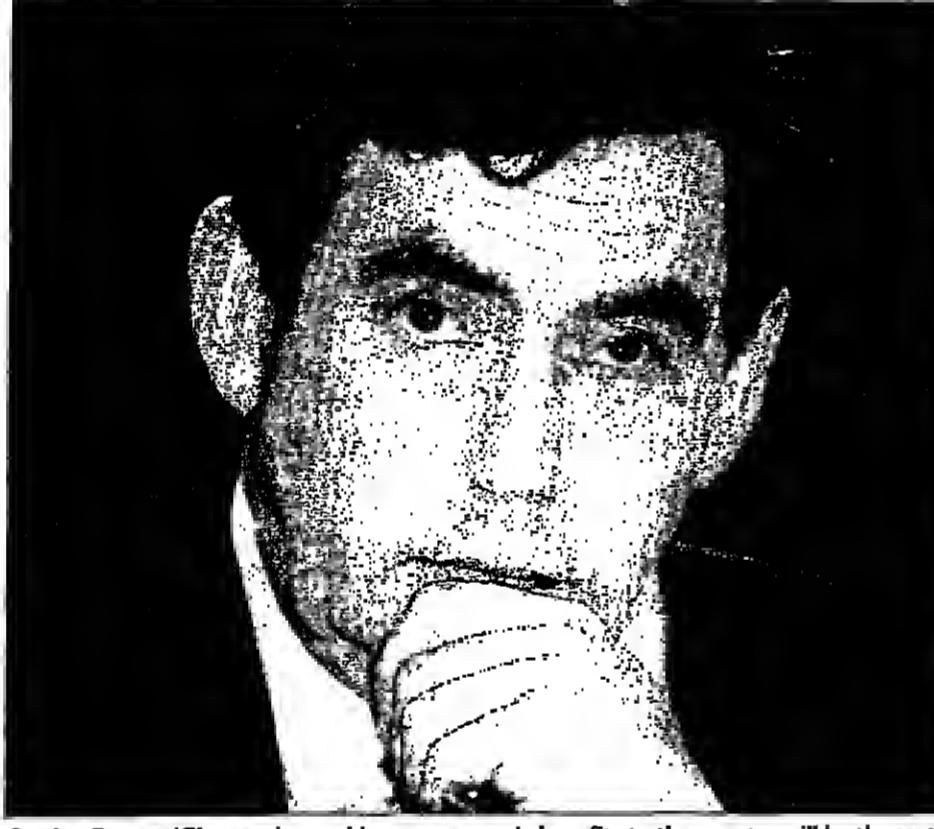
Now the bear case, the terms of the compensation deal are at least as good and probably better than the market had been expecting. In addition to a cash payment of £530m, Hongkong Telecom ceases to make royalty payments of £42m a year for the privilege of owning the monopoly. Moreover, it is allowed to begin ratcheting up charges for line rentals having had to provide them up until now at below cost with a subsidy from international call revenues. Finally, C&W preserves its majority shareholding in Hongkong Telecom with the clear understanding that it will not cede control unless it gets something concrete back from Peking, in the shape of real access to the Chinese mainland.

Now the bear case, Hongkong is already a relatively mature and saturated market. Moreover, competition in the domestic market already means that no-one pays for a local call; now the same market forces are about to bear down on Hongkong Telecom's international business. But the biggest question marks concern when, how and indeed whether C&W will ever get a meaningful deal with the Chinese. Peking remains paranoid about granting access to China's telephone system, regarding it less as a commercial opportunity and more as a threat to national security.

Hongkong Telecom waxes lyrical about exploring new investment opportunities in the colony, mainland China and Asia Pacific. But to rest of the world, it looks to be relaxing its grip on the region and forcing its majority shareholder to beat a retreat at the same time.

## No hurdles to stop us joining the single currency, Brown tells the City

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, sent a clear signal yesterday that there would be no practical obstacles to eventual UK membership of the single European currency. Diane Coyle, Economics Editor, listened to the Chancellor address a City symposium at the Bank of England.



Gordon Brown: 'Clear and unambiguous economic benefits to the country will be the test'

The Chancellor announced that the next Finance Bill would contain measures dealing with technical tax problems identified by business. The Inland Revenue issued a statement setting out detailed proposals for change.

In addition the Department of Trade and Industry is considering amending the Companies Act to make it easier for companies to re-denominate their shares in Euros.

Mr Brown said the Government would use the UK's European presidency to launch an information campaign on the single currency, financed by the EU. He said: 'We are the first British government to decide for the principle of monetary union.'

He added: 'Clear and unambiguous economic benefits to the country will be the test.' The decision would be determined by what was good for jobs and prosperity, not by dogma, he told the audience of City executives.

If anyone says they are prepared then they are lying, commented one senior investment banker.

## Recs face £50m competition delay fine

John Battle, the Energy Minister, was under increasing pressure last night to impose stiffer financial penalties on the electricity industry after several suppliers warned that even the five-month delay in launching domestic competition might not be enough. Michael Harrison reports.

Professor Stephen Littlechild, the electricity regulator, yesterday bowed to the inevitable and confirmed that the opening up of the domestic electricity market would be delayed from this April to September - at the earliest. Customers in some parts of the country will not be free to choose their supplier until June, 1999.

The Chancellor was speaking at the Bank of England's second annual symposium on the City's preparations for EMU. The Bank is keen to ensure that Britain's non-participation in the first wave will not harm the City.

John Townend, head of a new Euro preparation division within the Bank, said: 'Provided we complete the technical preparations, the City will thrive on the Euro, even on the outside.'

Speaking on the eve of a joint Confederation of British Industry and British Chambers of Commerce EMU conference, Adair Turner,

struts from 1 January 1999 - just 240 working days away.

David Clementi, Bank of England Deputy Governor, will next month lead a 'roadshow' selling London's merits as a centre for Euro banking in financial centres such as New York and Tokyo.

EMU is very much flavour of the week. Today also sees the launch of a broader initiative by employers' organisations to prepare British business for the start of the single currency.

Mr George said a head from a major country like France could be perceived as trying to exert national influence.

Describing the delay as 'disappointing', Professor Littlechild added that it would result in penalties of about £50m being paid by the 14 suppliers in the form of lower bills for their 26 million customers. The rebate averages less than £2 a customer and will not be paid until 1999.

However, Mr Battle will come under pressure to take a tougher line with the 12 regional electricity companies (Recs) and the two Scottish suppliers when he meets them along with Professor Littlechild tomorrow.

Centrica, the trading arm of British Gas which will also attend the meeting, called on Mr Battle to force the electricity suppliers to pay compensation of £20 a head - the sum it calculates customers could have saved if the competitive market had gone ahead on schedule.

The two energy regulators, Offer and Ofgas, are also preparing to issue new guidelines clamping down on 'dual fuel' offers from the Recs whereby customers can get cheaper gas bills if they agree to continue buying electricity from their local supplier.

Offer and Ofgas have been investigating whether this amounts to predatory pricing and whether it distorts the market by making it less likely that customers will switch suppliers when competition starts.

So far only one other rival company has applied for a licence to enter the domestic electricity market in addition to Centrica, which already faces competition for domestic gas customers.

Professor Littlechild took the decision to postpone the opening of the market on the advice of the programme manager PA Consulting which blamed the delay on changes needed to allow each of the Recs' computer systems to talk to one another. But he said he did not rule

out the possibility of the market opening up in some areas of the country before September if testing went well.

At least two Recs cast doubt on the ability of the industry to meet even a September deadline. One said: 'Even the revised timetable is shaky. It relies on there being no further changes to the specification but the PA Consulting report says there is a significant risk that further changes will be needed.'

Another Rec said: 'Achieving even the new delayed deadlines will require a lot of dialogue and a lot of central control and there is no leeway built in.'

Under the revised timetable competition will start first in the Eastern, Teeside, Yorkshire and Merseyside regions. Scottish Power, Hydro-Electric, Midlands and Northern will open in October and the remaining areas in December. In each region the opening of the market will be phased over six months.

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## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

### Squeeze is on for Somerfield

It has been a strange year for Somerfield. Following its difficult flotation in August 1996 when the issue price had to be cut twice, the group's shares spent most of last year trading virtually in line with the market. This was in spite of the fact that it floated on a forward earnings multiple of five and with a yield of 10 per cent. Then in the last month the shares have soared from around 190p to a high of 251 last week.

This was either bid speculation – with the group being identified as a potential merger target in a sector keen on consolidation – or a catch-up process as Somerfield shares had missed out on much of the upgrading in supermarket ratings since the summer.

Whatever prompted the buying spree, it certainly cannot be trading. Somerfield did well to report a 12 per cent increase in underlying profits to £56.9m in the six months to 8 November. But the problem is that the growth all seems to be coming from widening margins. Like-for-like sales growth in the period was just 0.3 per cent and current trading is not much better at 0.6 per cent.

Given that the company said in the summer that its target was sales growth above the industry average this is an under-achievement. Tesco, for example, reported like-for-like growth of 6.5 per cent on Monday against an industry average of 3.3 per cent. With sales virtually stagnant, Somerfield is having to rely on squeezing suppliers' to drive margins. They rose from 3.4 per cent to 3.8 per cent on the year.

Management is talking about improving sales with better product availability, refit programmes and an improved product mix. With costs on the up and the tax charge rising, however, this may not be enough. There is some scope to improve the store portfolio with refits but the large sales increases have already been achieved.

A merger is always a possibility though it is difficult to see any of the big UK supermarkets paying 300p a share for a company that was offered to them for 160p by Kleinwort Benson just before the flotation.

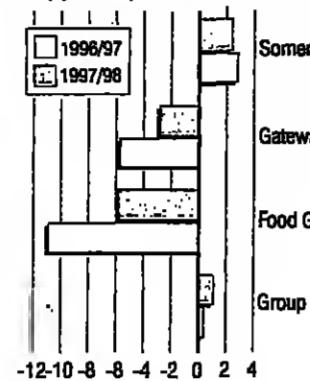
### Somerfield: At a glance

Market value: £729m, share price 241.5p (+4p)

Trading record	1995	1996	1997	96/7	97/8
Turnover (£bn)	3.1	3.1	3.2	1.71	1.72
Pre-tax profits (£m)	(33.3)	92.0	105.4	54.6	80.9
Earnings per share (p)	–	29.3	29.4	14.9	17.8
Dividends per share (p)	–	–	10.2	3.4	3.8

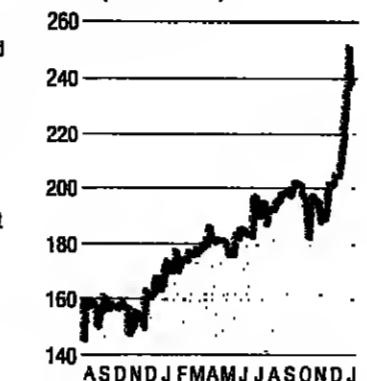
### Like for like sales growth

% (by format)



### Share price

Pence (since flotation)



lenges in 1998. Even though it is one of the country's strongest financial institutions, the shares will struggle to justify their current exalted rating. Investors who hold the shares should consider locking in some profits. Otherwise, steer clear for now.

### Tough first year for Ushers

Shareholders were no doubt drowning their sorrows last night after the latest figures from Ushers of Trowbridge. In its first year as a public company, the Wilshire-based regional brewer unveiled pre-tax profits of £11.3m, up from £10.6m, but well down on the original estimates when it floated in March last year. Not that the gloom was unexpected. Management had warned in November that things had got tough.

Still, those who took a punt on Ushers at the time of the flotation will feel hard done by. At the time, investors were told that problems which held up a flotation three years before were history. And most thought a flotation price of 110p – a discount to rivals Mansfield and Fullers – would shield them from trouble. Not so. After a 2p rise yesterday they languish at 72p.

So what has gone wrong? Most of the problems came when a five-year contract with Courage came to a halt. Then Ushers found itself out of pocket after Miller Light, which the group brews under licence, failed to capture drinkers' imaginations.

Roger North, the pugnacious chief executive, now says these ructions really are in the past. He insists that underlying financial performance remains strong, pointing to like-for-like profits growth of 10 per cent from the pub estate.

Mr North and his chairman, Tom Vyner, think the shares are undervalued. They were in the market yesterday buying up 30,000 shares each and are seeking permission to buy back shares from their investors.

On 1998 profit estimates of £14.5m, the shares trade on a future multiple of around 6.5. Even for the depressed regional brewing sector, that's low. But having disappointed so soon after flotation, management needs to show it is back on the right path before anyone buys these shares.

So the Pru faces a number of challenges in 1998.

Assuming full-year profits of £115m, the shares, up 4p to 241.5p yesterday, trade on a forward p/e ratio of 8 and yield almost 5 per cent. Still a substantial discount to the sector but, given the recent strong run, it may be time to lock in some profits.

### Pru could be set for a struggle

Reading the financial pages, you might have got the impression that the Prudential's name was mud with its shareholders and customers alike. The country's biggest life insurer was publicly rebuked twice last year for its treatment of the pensions mis-selling fiasco. It had to stop recruiting while its entire direct sales force was retrained. And it parted company with Jim Sutcliffe, the anointed heir to chief executive Sir Peter Davis, after a boardroom struggle.

All the more surprising then, to see that both customers and shareholders

gave the Pru the benefit of the doubt in 1997. New business figures, released yesterday, showed that single product sales were up 19 per cent while sales of regular premiums rose 7 per cent. Over the same period Prudential shares, helped by the general euphoria about financial stocks, rose by almost 50 per cent.

Judging by yesterday's 26p share price fall to 770p, however, investors are thinking again. Although there was some inevitable profit-taking, analysts were disappointed with the figures, which showed a fall in fourth-quarter sales in the US. Prudential's problem is that its products do better when interest rates are high. With no prospect of a US rates rising, sales will slow.

In the UK, meanwhile, all the bad publicity is unlikely to help this year, although the inclusion of last year's Scottish Amicable acquisition will provide a new source of revenues. And the Asian turmoil is bound to dent the Pru's sales in the Far East, though the group claims it is too early to tell.

So the Pru faces a number of challenges in 1998.

THE INDEPENDENT  
INDEPENDENT  
ON SUNDAY

## £10 Conran lunch

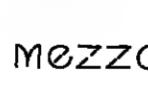
The Independent and Independent on Sunday in association with Terence Conran are delighted to offer readers the opportunity to enjoy lunch or early evening supper at six of London's top restaurants throughout January and February for £10

From Monday January 5th until Saturday February 28th, the following establishments are offering readers a two course lunch or early evening supper for just £10 per person.

### How to Book

To participate in the offer simply collect one token (tokens will be printed every day until Saturday February 28th) and then telephone the restaurant of your choice quoting yourself as an independent diner. On your arrival at the restaurant you should present your token in order to qualify for the offer. Each token is valid for a complete table booking. The tokens will be valid for one week only, and will be dated accordingly. To continue to participate in the offer, simply collect a token from the week in which you wish to dine. Pre-booking is essential and all bookings are subject to availability.

A special discount is available on selected items in the Bluebird and Le Pont de la Tour shops on presentation of the token.



### The Independent offer is available at the following restaurants:

Bluebird 350 King's Road, London, SW3 5UW  
0171 559 1000

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Blue Print Cafe The Design Museum, 28 Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE  
0171 378 7031

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm\*

Le Pont de la Tour Bar & Grill 36d Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE  
0171 403 8403

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm\*

Mezzo 100 Wardour Street, London, W1V 3LE  
0171 314 4000

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

closed Saturday lunchtime, open Sunday 12pm - 4pm

Quaglini's 16 Bury Street, St James's, London, SW1Y 6AL  
0171 930 6767

Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 5.30pm - 6.30pm

Zinc Bar & Grill 21 Heddon Street, London, W1R 7LF  
0171 255 8899

The special 3 course menu is available between 12noon and 7pm between Monday and Wednesday the offer is extended until 11pm\*

The offer is available 7 days a week at all six restaurants

\*Closed from 6pm on Sunday Offer not available after 6pm on February 14

This voucher entitles the holder and all members of their booking to participate in The Independent/Conran Restaurants £10 lunch offer

THE INDEPENDENT INDEPENDENT

Valid between Saturday January 17th and Friday January 23rd

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

This voucher entitles the holder and all members of their booking to participate in The Independent/Conran Restaurants £10 lunch offer

## Carlton chiefs take pay cuts after moderate profit growth

Michael Green, the chairman of Carlton Communications, the media group, was paid almost a quarter less last year than in 1996. Most of his fellow executive directors also took pay cuts after the company produced moderate profit growth and its share price fell. Peter Thal Larsen reports on a rare display of executive pay restraint.

Last year, Carlton's earnings per share before exceptional items grew by just 5 per cent as profits were hit by the strong pound and troubles at the company's video production division.

Mr Green was not the only

Carlton director to take a pay cut. June de Moller, the managing director, saw her pay total fall from £380,278 to £289,091, while finance director Bernard Cragg, the finance director, was paid £252,202 – a drop of 25 per cent.

However, Nigel Walmsley, the director who runs Carlton's television arm, enjoyed a pay rise. The remuneration committee rewarded him for his "exceptional contribution" in helping British Digital Broadcasting (BDB),

  
Michael Green: Cut in pay of £169,000 since 1996

According to figures disclosed in Carlton's annual report, Mr Green received total remuneration of £558,060 last year. That was £169,000 less than in 1996, when his pay reached £727,090. Although Mr Green saw his basic salary increase from £470,000 to £495,000, his annual bonus was cut from £23,250 to just £18,562.

According to the report of Carlton's remuneration committee, the company paid executive directors an annual bonus of just 3.75 per cent of salary last year. The bonus, which can be up to 50 per cent of salary, is related to "year-on-year" real growth in earnings per share.

## Reed faces £200m penalty

Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing group, yesterday announced that the cost of compensating advertisers who were overcharged for space in its hotel and airline directories is likely to reach £200m.

The scandal, originally revealed by Reed in a trading statement in September, relates to the exaggeration by Reed Travel Group of circulation figures for its directories between 1991 and 1997. Following an investigation involving an army of accountants, lawyers and circulation auditors Reed has put a compensa-

tion package to its advertisers. However Reed said the charge and the subsequent write-down of the intangible assets of Reed Travel Group, both of which will be taken against 1997 profits, would not affect the terms of its merger with Wolters Kluwer, the Dutch publisher.

Reed has yet to decide by how much it will write down the assets of Reed Travel Group, but the finance director, Mark Armour, said the adjustment, which does not affect cash flow, would be "substantial". On 31 December 1996, Reed Travel

Group had intangible assets of £472m. Analysts expect them to be written down by between £200m and £250m. Shares in Reed International, the UK-listed holding company for Reed Elsevier, firmed 13p to 653p.

Meanwhile, Reed also said it had decided to split up Reed Travel Group and distribute the various parts among its other businesses. The Hotel Directories and Travel Business Magazines arms would become part of Reed Business Information in the US.

— Peter Thal Larsen

## Small businesses want incentives to invest

Small businesses want the Government to introduce incentives for investment and simplify the tax system in the spring Budget, a report showed today. Company owners should be encouraged to retain profits in their own firms, said the 112,000-member Federation of Small Businesses. Bureaucracy in VAT collection should be reduced and capital gains tax should be reformed to allow payment by instalments, the federation said in its Budget submission.

### Card spending hits £10bn

Christmas shoppers splashed out more than £10bn on their plastic cards last month – the highest total ever. However, the rate of growth on credit and debit card spending slowed in December to 13 per cent, its lowest level more than a year, according to the Credit Card Research Group. Earlier in 1997, monthly card spending was growing at an annual rate of as much as 25 per cent.

The CCRG blamed the slowdown in growth on the impact of higher interest rates and on the large number of retailers who now accept credit and debit cards.

### Sears cuts 340 jobs

Sears is to cut around 340 warehouse jobs as part of the rationalisation of the remaining parts of its British Shoe Corporation business. Most of the jobs will go at its Braintree warehouse in Essex, which is being taken over by Freemans, the group's mail order business. A further 30 will be lost at its warehouse in Washington, Tyne and Wear which is being closed along with another site in Bourne, near Peterborough.

### Somerfield stays silent

Somerfield, the supermarket group whose shares have soared in the last month, remained tight-lipped yesterday in speculation that it might be involved in a merger. "We never comment on market rumour," said David Simons, chief executive. Mr Simons said he planned to remain at Somerfield for the balance of his career, scotching rumours that he might move on. He was speaking as Somerfield reported a 12 per cent growth in half-year underlying profits to £56.9m.

Investment column, this page

### Allders sales ahead



**Naut  
the a**

Nicholls says  
that Business  
is booming

**RICHARD EDMOND**  
NAP. Alpine 104  
Whitby, L. I.  
N.B. Scarsdale  
Wadsworth, 1-4000

# Serpentine Gallery

Art by Langlands & Bell  
"Frozen Sky 1997"

Bloomberg

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## Tales of Rodger the Mariner whose ship has already come in

Stanley Matthews was 38 before he laid hands on one. Tom Finney and George Best finished without one. Alan Shearer has not even come close to one. Yet there was Graham Rodger, a month out of his teens, climbing the steps to the Royal Box to claim his FA Cup winner's medal.

Looking back to 1987, it all seems like a crazy dream. Coventry City, who had never won any serious silverware, overcame Tottenham Hotspur 3-2 in a classic final. And one ardent supporter lived out the ultimate Sky Blue fantasy, right down to helping to make the winning goal.

That fan was Rodger. Now, as one of the elder statesmen of Grimsby Town's team, he is on the Wembley trail again. In Saturday's fourth round, the Second Division play-off contenders visit Leeds United. The tie stirs fond memories for the 30-year-old central defender, for it was the Yorkshire club that Coventry beat, also by 3-2, in an equally epic semi-final.

Rodger did not figure against Billy Bremner's underdogs. Amazingly, his appearance as substitute against Spurs was his first during Coventry's run. Having been hauled off in their exit at Watford the previous year, after a chasing from Nigel Callaghan, he had still to play a full FA Cup tie when he emulated Matthews.

Add the fact that Rodger had started a mere 15 League matches and it is no wonder he feels "extremely lucky". All the more so given that he owed his break to the misfortune of a friend, Brian Borrows, having damaged a cartilage a week before the final.

Though he knew there would have to be a reshuffle, Rodger did not expect to be involved. "There was Steve Sedgley, Paul Culpin and me," he recalled, "and I honestly believed the other two would be the subs."

The final inkling came as the Coventry squad watched the build-up before leaving their hotel for the stadium. "They were going through our line-up and my picture came up as a sub. The manager [John Sillett] hadn't said anything so I assumed it was just the TV people taking a guess."

It was therefore a relaxed Rodger who joined in the ritual pre-match stroll around the pitch. Then he reached the dressing-room. "I saw my boots laid out and the No 14 shirt waiting for me. I remember

thinking: 'Bloody hell, I'm playing here'. But still no one had told me.

"Finally, just before the team talk, Mr Sillett said: 'Oh, by the way, you're on the bench'. It was a masterstroke - typical of his man-management - because I had no time to worry about the game."

Coventry, facing the likes of Hoddle, Waddle, Gough and Ardiles, quickly fell behind. But they were level at 2-2 when, late in normal time, Brian Kilcline was hurt in a characteristically uncompromising challenge. Rodger took over, and in extra time intercepted a pass by the current England coach to Clive Allen.

"I strode into midfield and saw this wonder ball out to Nick Pickering on the far wing. I didn't go for it because I thought: 'God, if I mess it up I could let them clean in'. I took another touch and noticed

### FA CUP COUNTDOWN



BY PHIL SHAW

Lloyd McGrath on the near side.

"I have to admit it wasn't the best of passes, but Lloyd managed to keep it in. He crossed it, we got the lucky deflection off Gary Mabbutt and the rest is history."

This most unsung of final heroes had originally been spotted by Wolves, along with Tim Flowers, in Warwickshire schools football. They became apprentices at Molineux and into terminal decline under the ownership of the mysterious Batti brothers.

"I never saw them - I don't think they actually existed," Rodger said, only half-jokingly. "When you're that young you don't concern yourself with what's going on behind the scenes. All you think of is football. But we lads used to make the tea for the pros. When the milkman wouldn't deliver unless the club settled their bill, he will have no chance of doing likewise in Grimsby."

"I was there, I was part of it and no one can ever take that away from me," Rodger beamed, while admitting he could probably walk through the centre of Coventry unrecognised. If Leeds are humbled, he will have no chance of doing likewise in Grimsby.

## Barnwell acts as the peacemaker

The League Managers' Association chief executive, John Barnwell, is calling for referees and managers "to build bigger bridges between each other" after the controversy of the weekend.

Barnwell wants managers and referees to hold more meetings to try to develop a greater understanding of the demands of each other's profession.

Among the topics he wants debated is a possible cooling-off period for managers at the end of the game before they confront match officials or the media. His comments follow an outburst in the press by the Coventry manager, Gordon Strachan, within five minutes of the end of Saturday's 2-2 draw with Arsenal, in which he claimed referees were giving his side "nothing".

Barnwell said: "What we don't want to do is inflame this situation and people are trying to whip up an us and them situation between managers and referees which is not the case."

"If you aren't careful you can end up with a very entrenched position of 'them and us' and it's not that. What the aim of everyone should be is for the improvement of the game."

Another manager wanting more clarification from officials is Leeds' George Graham who yesterday called on the Football Association and the Referees' Association to issue uniform guidelines on the use of video evidence.

After a solitary outing with Wolves, at just 17, he was offered a six-month contract with the club he had followed since boyhood. He stayed at Coventry four and a half years - gaining four England Under-21 caps in the company of one Paul Gascoigne - before moving to Luton.

One of his managers there, David Pleat, had been in charge of Spurs at Wembley. "We never spoke about the final," Rodger said, "but he did get rid of me three months later."

When Grimsby came in for him, he had to ask Luton's kit manager where it was. Six years later, the manager who signed him, Alan Buckley, is back at Blundell Park. He has moulded the Mariners into a free-flowing unit, described by Rodger as "tight at the back, with real flair".

Early this season, he was not in Buckley's plans and told him reserve football was no use at his age. "He understood and said I could have a free transfer in recognition of my service, which was great. Then Mark Lever broke a toe, I came back in and things have gone well for myself and the team."

In tandem with a Hanseatic young Scot, Peter Handyside, he has helped Grimsby knock two top-flight clubs out of the Coca-Cola Cup - Sheffield Wednesday and the holders, Leicester - as well as nailing Norwich 3-0 to earn a day out at Elland Road.

"The gulf between our level and the Premiership is vast, but we've shown that you've got a chance if you play above yourselves and they underperform. I'm not saying we'll win, but we're playing some excellent stuff. The pressure's all on

Rodger, of course, has first-hand experience of Cup psychology. Reflecting on his finest half-hour, he pictures the Coventry apprentices (including Steve Livingstone, who now leads Grimsby's attack), "going mental" as Kilcline raised the trophy; and he hears the crowd crowing "Are you watching, Jimmy Greaves?" to the media pundit and ex-Spurs striker who tipped their demise at every stage.

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**Barnwell acts as the peacemaker**

Steve McManaman and Barcelona are facing an investigation by world football's governing body, Fifa, for using the former Spice Girls manager, Simon Fuller, to set up a £12m transfer.

Fuller works for the England midfielder and Barcelona have confirmed he has met them to review McManaman's move at the end of the season.

However, Fifa will investigate Fuller's role in the talks as he does not hold an agent's licence and therefore cannot be involved in transfers. If Fuller is found to have broken the rules, both McManaman and Barcelona will face heavy penalties.

McManaman yesterday dismissed the reports from Spain. He said: "How can I be expected to keep commenting on something that has no truth whatsoever."

A spokesman for McMan-



Graham Rodger, above, in the comfortable surroundings of Grimsby's Blundell Park and below (front row, second from right), in the heady arena of Wembley after Coventry had won the 1987 FA Cup beating Tottenham 3-2. Photographs: David Ashdown and Allsport



## McManaman faces probe over agent

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A spokesman for McMan-

aman's club, Liverpool, who agreed a £12.3m fee from Barcelona in summer only for McManaman's personal contractual talks to break down, said: "There has been no contact with Barcelona since last August."

Middlesbrough's manager, Bryan Robson, still hopes to sign Dion Dublin from Coventry, despite the striker rejecting a £4m move to the First Division club on Monday. Robson said: "I think the deal is still alive."

The Boro defender Gianluca Festa is awaiting the result of his appeal against his dismissal during the 1-1 draw with Ipswich on Saturday. Robson has accused the Ipswich striker David Johnson of diving when challenged by Festa.

Bradford City's chairman, Geoffrey Richmond, yesterday named 51 clubs who support his proposal to have David Mellor removed as head of the Government's Football Task Force after the former Conservative MP queried on his BBC Radio 5 Live show whether colour had been a factor in the sacking of Chris Kamara as Bradford's manager.

Richmond wrote to the other 91 Premiership and Nationwide League clubs and the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, appealing for support in his attempt to have Mellor ousted from his role on a body which has the stated aim of eliminating racism from football.

The 51 apparently supporting the campaign include Preston, Barnsley, Crystal Palace, Everton, Leicester, Newcastle, and Southampton. Two clubs, Wimbleton and Chester, support Mellor, while Leeds intend to raise the mat-

ter at tomorrow's FA Premier League meeting.

George Weah, who was linked last year with a move to Arsenal, could leave Milan at the end of the season, after an argument with the coach, Fabio Capello, over a back injury the Liberian striker suffered in the club's gym last month.

Doncaster players have refused to co-operate with an offer by Uri Geller to help Rovers climb off the bottom of the Third Division by using "positive thinking", starting by ensuring they beat Macclesfield on Saturday. Rovers had arranged a coach to Geller's home in Reading, but the manager, Mark Weaver, said: "They have been in touch with the PFA and are refusing to go. They say they have been made fools of enough this season."

- Alan Nixon

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### RUGBY UNION

## Brive coach slams English clubs' stance on Europe

England's militant senior clubs insist they have the full support of their French counterparts in their dispute with the organisers of the Heineken Cup - a committee room conflict that threatens the tournament's very existence. But, as Chris Hewitt reports, the first cracks in the united front have started to appear.

Never trust a strong, silent type, especially one with a vested interest to protect. Laurent Seigne, the former French Test prop whose coaching methods at Brive notoriously combine the brutal with the Trappist, yesterday broke ranks with the grand Anglo-French alliance that has set a time bomb ticking away beneath the outstanding club competition in world rugby.

Seigne does not speak often - neither in public nor, according to tales emanating from the European champions' dressing-room, in private - but when he does venture an opinion, it tends to cause ructions. His description of Pontypridd players as "semi-civilised animals" after the brawl in Le Bar Touzac last September ruffled plenty of feathers and he did his level best to raise a few hackles yesterday.

"The Heineken Cup is the ultimate," he pronounced as the rugby grapevine continued to suggest that the English clubs' decision to boycott the tournament had left it dead in the water. "We were very much into the competition from its launch because the games were like internationals and we have continued to see matches of a different level and quality. As a club, we have made progress with each fixture."

### SNOOKER

## Hunter overcomes lack of inexperience to see off Davis

Paul Hunter bridged a huge gulf in experience to defeat the six-times world champion, Steve Davis, in the Regal Welsh Open at Newport yesterday.

The promising 19-year-old from Leeds scored a 5-3 victory to reach the last 16 of the event and earn a meeting with the eighth seed, Nigel Bond. In the process, Hunter also impressed Davis, a player well-qualified to assess the relative merits of the game's up-and-coming young talents.

"I think the jury is out on my player until they win a tournament or two, but Paul certainly deserves his label as a strong prospect," said Davis. "He looks confident and he knows what he's doing around the table."

Hunter, quoted as an odds-on favourite by the bookmakers, fell 2-1 behind before racing through the following three frames in only 38 minutes thanks to breaks of 87, 72 and 56. Davis doggedly salvaged the next only for Hunter to apply the finishing touches to an accomplished performance by potting the blue to a distant baulk pocket in frame eight.

"It's a tremendous result for me, especially because that's the first time I have ever played Steve," said Hunter, the world No 43. "I was nervous before the start but once I'd got a frame under my belt I knew I could do something."

"With so many of the top players going out I feel capable of doing something," said Burnett. "Obviously, when you've beaten someone like Stephen, it gives you a tremendous amount of confidence and I'm really determined to capitalise on it."

Burnett's fellow countryman Graeme Dott was also in the groove as he set a personal best and put himself in line for a £5,000 bonus, for the highest televised break, during a 5-2 victory over Steve James.

"I have been very disheartened with my form in practice and in matches all season, but that was a lot better," he said. "Watching a slow-motion replay

It was a clear statement of support for the tournament, the future of which is likely to be decided this week. Board members of European Rugby Cup Ltd, the organising body, meet in Dublin on Friday to discuss next season's fixture schedules, the issue tentatively responsible for English discontent. The men in grey suits insist a solution can be hammered out, especially if they manage to seduce the unpredictable French contingent.

Sadly, they appear to be mistaken. The Allied Dunbar Premiership clubs remain adamant that they will not participate in any ERC tournament next season, not simply because of the wrangle over fixtures but because of a profound mistrust of senior board members, notably Tom Kiernan, the Irish chairman, and Vernon Pugh of Wales. The decision of Charles Lewison, the Wasps executive who represented the interests of the English clubs, to resign from the board leaves Bill Beaumont, a Rugby Football Union nominee, as the only Englishman likely to attend on Friday.

"I don't think there is a single English club against the idea of European rugby," insisted one high-profile Premiership chief executive yesterday. "But we want Europe to work to the benefit of us all and at the moment that isn't happening. It doesn't look like happening, either, not with ERC in charge. There are just too many issues to resolve."

Meanwhile, Michael Lyman, the 34-year-old former Wallaby stand-off and captain whose craftsmanship has been the essential ingredient in Saracens' sudden challenge for Premiership honours, was today expected to confirm his retirement at the end of the season. Philippe Sella, the north London clubs' equally venerable French centre, has already announced that this will be his final top-level campaign.

Paul Hunter bridged a huge gulf in experience to defeat the six-times world champion, Steve Davis, in the Regal Welsh Open at Newport yesterday.

Stephen Hendry in last year's Welsh Open, joined Hunter in the last 16 with a 5-2 win over Tony Chappell, the Swans'

professional responsible for Ken Doherty's surprise second-round exit. King, who pinched the first frame on the black, with an excellent 66 clearance, added breaks of 67 and 86 in leading 4-2 before he sealed victory by potting green to pink in a eight seventh.

Mark King, runner-up

coach slams  
h clubs'  
e on Europe

## MOTOR RACING

## Prost cannot resist a swipe at the driver who got away

**Alain Prost** is as ambitious in team ownership as he was as a driver. Yesterday he questioned Damon Hill's ambition at the launch of his team's new car, one the British former world champion chose not to drive. **Derick Allop** reports from Barcelona.

Alain Prost launched his new car, the Peugeot-powered AP01, here yesterday, intent

on proving Damon Hill was wrong to reject the chance of driving it.

A day after Hill expressed his unease at leading the Jordan challenge without the status of No 1, Prost was buoyant at the prospect of placing his car in the care of his fellow Frenchman, Olivier Panis, and Jarno Trulli. The inexperienced Italian was given his chance when Hill decided against joining Prost at the last minute and opted instead for Jordan, whose new car he will test the Jordan for the first time here this morning.

That sudden change of direction by the former world champion patiently still irks the man who won the title four times. But Prost's

ill-starred negotiations with the driver he partnered at Williams five years ago have left him concluding: "I'm not sure Damon has the motivation to be world champion again. Now I have no regrets he did not sign for us."

"I think what I have always thought that Damon made the wrong decision. He was very close to signing for us. The papers were ready to sign. He told us with two hours to go that he would not be joining us."

"I don't think it was anything to do with money. What I promised him and the way I intend to run the team was no build. I'm straight with drivers. It's easy to make promises and not deliver. But we aim to be

a top team. That means breaking into the leading four. I don't know how soon we can do that but if it is not this year I hope it will be next year."

"I am very happy with the drivers we have. Olivier is experienced now and fully recovered from his accident last year. Jarno is young but now he can learn and concentrate on his driving because the car is his."

Prost has endeavoured to foster a sense of togetherness in his team, training with his drivers in a carefully choreographed bonding programme. He is also forming an open working relationship with Peugeot

which, he believes, will benefit both concerns. He said: "It is important for us all to work together. I want the drivers to be fit but also we want the morale to be good. It is the same with Peugeot. We have an open relationship with them, which is not usual in Formula One. But it is like being in the same team, sharing information and facilities. This is the way to go in the future."

Prost has taken a step towards that future by building a new factory and increasing his work-force to 150. To prosper, he knows he must beat the likes of Jordan and graduate to the "Premier League".

He said: "It is difficult to compete and

survive in Formula One. We all have our objectives and I know I have to deliver."

Trulli has charmed the French camp by learning the language to a passable standard inside three months, and seemingly forming a sound relationship with his team-mate.

Panis, who suffered double fractures to both legs during last season's Canadian Grand Prix, said: "I would have been happy to work with Damon Hill and I'm a bit disappointed with his decision because it would have been a big challenge for him. Jarno is young, quick, and we are working hard together to develop the car."

## WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES

## Numbers 'no barrier to the medal zone' for Britain

**Britain** will be taking their smallest Winter Olympic team in nearly 30 years to the Games in Nagano, Japan. **Mike Rawbottom** reports.

Just 33 competitors have passed the strict British Olympic Association criteria to earn selection for the Winter Games in Nagano beginning on 7 February – the lowest number since 17 Britons competed at the 1960 Games in Squaw Valley.

However, the BOA chief executive, Simon Clegg, is cautiously optimistic about the impact the team can make.

"I am confident that we are taking a solid team to the Games," Clegg said. "We are not a winter sport nation, but we

have a number of athletes who we will be expecting to reach the medal zone in their events."

Top six places are expected from the men's curling team, the four-man bobsleigh team led by Sean Olson and the speed skater Nicky Gooch, who will be part of a relay team also aiming to be in a medal chance.

Graham Bell, named in the alpine skiing, will be making his fifth Winter Games appearance, as will Michael Dixon, a 35-year-old Army officer who competed in the cross-country skiing event at the Sarajevo Games of 1984 but has now switched to the biathlon.

**GREAT BRITAIN TEAM** (for Winter Olympic Games, Nagano, Japan, 7-24 Feb): 1. Bobsleigh: G. Olson, S. Olson, M. Dixon, G. Bell; 2. Curling: A. Goss, A. Freshwater, S. Ormond, G. Gooch; 3. Freestyle Skiing (Freestyle): T. Dugden, G. Gooch, M. Dixon, S. Olson, L. Paul, D. Ward, L. Johnson, P. Arwood, C. Ashton; 4. Handball: 5. Ice Hockey: M. Clegg, J. Jackson, M. Jackson, M. Jackson, D. Moore, S. Cousins, C. Curting (ment); 6. Diving: P. Wilson, P. Wilson, J. Neuber, J. Dryburgh, C. Curting (woman); 7. Hay, L. Loudon, K. Loudon, J. Lockhart, P. Bayne.

The announcement of the final party ended the lingering hopes of two Britons – Keith Yandell in the Juge, and Lesley McKenna in the snowboarding event. Yandell failed to satisfy the BOA with his performances this season, and McKenna did not do enough to convince the International Ski Federation to allocate a place to Britain, despite at least one top-20 placing in recent World Cup competition.

The team contains at least two members who may not be British for long. David

## Kenyans take up the running on the snow trails

Following in the tradition of Jamaica's bobsleigh team and Eddie the Eagle, the Winter Olympic Games in Nagano, Japan, will feature the latest unlikely candidates for glory.

Kenya, the nation which consistently produces middle and long-distance running champions, does not even have a national skiing federation. However, it does have its first cross-country skiing team, featuring Philip Boit, whose uncle Mike won bronze over 800 metres at the 1972 Munich Olympics. "I am very proud, very happy," Boit said from his training base in Nastola, Finland.

The concept behind Boit's Olympic odyssey is simple. In a country with an abundance of

running talent, even an average performer could have the edge in other endurance sports. Stick a pair of skis on the runner and Africa could have its first Winter Games gold medallist.

In practice, it has been a little more complicated for Boit and his training partner, Henry Bitok, since they moved north nearly two years ago. For a start, when they stepped off the plane from Nairobi, it was the first time they had seen snow.

After two years and \$200,000 (£125,000) of investment by the American shoe company which sponsors the Kenyan track team, some progress has been made. The pair possess the endurance and stamina. Boit, aged 26, has 1500m best of 3min 40sec.

Bitok, 28, is a world-class steeplechaser. However, both have found the techniques difficult.

In 10km events, a distance at which the Kenyans excel on the track, Boit and Bitok have managed to reduce their early efforts by more than 60min, yet they still trail world-class sliders. To qualify for Nagano, Boit had to compete in at least five recognised races. Bitok has managed only four events, but will travel to Nagano in the hope he might be able to compete.

Jussi Lehtinen, the Finnish ski coach who has been working with the Kenyans, believes that while progress has been slow, it is just a matter of time before the Africans begin to challenge the world on the snow trails.

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## SPORTING DIGEST

## Basketball

New York 98 Boston 82; Philadelphia 98 Seattle 82; Atlanta 98; Chicago 98; LA Lakers 98 Orlando 88; Charlotte 98 Toronto 88; New Jersey 98 San Antonio 84; Seattle 94; Houston 82; Utah 98 Detroit 83.

## Bowls

WORLD INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS (Prato): Pairs first round: S. Rivas and P. Pineda 7-5; D. Gourlay and H. Duff (both) 7-5; A. and A. Marshall (both) 7-5; T. Bayly and A. Welch (Glasgow) 7-5; Hay, L. Loudon, K. Loudon 7-5.

## Cricket

WORLD CUP (Colombia): Zimbabwe 24-10; USA 16 (over); P. Taylor 67; Sri Lanka Board Presidents XI 24-5; 6-16 (over); 3 (S) Javaunesse 25; Malagasy 24; Sri Lanka Board XI won by four wickets.

The concept behind Boit's Olympic odyssey is simple. In a country with an abundance of

## Football

PONTING LEAGUE First Division: Peñiscola 1, Valencia 1; Getafe 1, Zaragoza 1; Almeria 1, Valencia 1; Getafe 1, Zaragoza 1; Second Division: Peñiscola 1, Zaragoza 1; Getafe 1, Valencia 1.

## MEN'S LATE RESULTS

THE TIMES FA YOUTH CUP Third round: Participants: Everton v Stoke (playing tomorrow).

## TENNIS

WORLD TEAM MATCH (Colombia): Zimbabwe 24-10; USA 16 (over); P. Taylor 67; Sri Lanka Board Presidents XI 24-5; 6-16 (over); 3 (S) Javaunesse 25; Malagasy 24; Sri Lanka Board XI won by four wickets.

## Cycling

The Tour de France, which starts in Dublin this year, will begin in the Vendée region of western France next year, with the prologue at Puy du Fou on 3 July and the first stage from Montaigu to Challans.

Richard Head, the race director, said: "We are looking forward to the 1999 Tour de France, which will be a great success."

## SWIMMING

British Swimming's new coach, Steve

Ward, has been appointed to the men's 400m individual medley and 200m butterfly.

Ward, who has been working with the Kenyans, believes that while progress has been slow, it is just a matter of time before the Africans begin to challenge the world on the snow trails.

## SWIMMING

British Swimming's new coach, Steve

## TENNIS

British Swimming's new coach, Steve

## Cycling

British Swimming's new coach, Steve

## SWIMMING

British Swimming's new coach,

## France details World Cup security strategy

France will deploy about 6,000 police and several hundred soldiers to maintain security and prevent terrorist attacks during this year's World Cup, the French interior minister announced yesterday.

"We are managing a crowd phenomenon. These are phenomena which are difficult to control, and excesses are possible," Jean-Pierre Chevenement said. "As a result, we will take the necessary measures."

More than two million people, including hundreds of thousands of fans from across Europe, are expected to attend

the 64 games at this year's World Cup in June and July at 10 different stadiums across France.

French authorities are being especially vigilant about potential disturbances and police forces across the Continent are already exchanging photographs of potential troublemakers in order to minimise the possibility of fighting between rival groups of fans.

Between 5,000 and 6,000 police will be on hand to ensure security during the 33 days of competition and at least 300 soldiers will help ensure safety as part of anti-terrorist measures

already in effect. Special security checks of fans will take place before they enter the stadiums, and security officials will patrol public transport and parking areas.

Stadium rules forbid fans to take in any political banners, knives, bottles, glasses, metal boxes, rods, helmets, or alcohol. Anyone caught breaking these rules could face up to three years in jail and a maximum £10,000 fine.

Chevenement announced that extra security measures could be taken for matches deemed "high risk", including

unit between Belgium and the Netherlands, where fans have clashed previously.

In addition to security provided by French authorities, private security officials will be allowed to help ensure safety inside stadiums, the minister said.

Bomb-sniffing dogs will also be in place at stadiums to help detect whether any suspicious packages are explosives.

Security measures will be tested during the inaugural match at the Stade de France on 28 January between France and Spain. Philippe Massoni, the police official responsible for

Paris and the surrounding area, said that match represented the first test of the security measures that will be employed during the World Cup.

Chevenement also said a decision on what to do about the fences at two stadiums in Nantes and St-Etienne would be made soon.

Following the 1989 tragedy at Hillsborough that killed 96 supporters, Fifa, the game's world governing body, has had a policy that perimeter fencing should be removed so that fans can run on to the field in an emergency.

Fifa strengthened that policy after another disaster at Guatemala in October 1996 when 78 fans were crushed to death in a stadium stampede.

But local authorities in Nantes and St-Etienne want to keep their fences, which have only recently been constructed.

Matthias Sammer will decide in two months whether his career is to be brought to an end by a persistent knee problem.

Borussia Dortmund said yesterday. The club denied a report which said Sammer would never play football again.

FA Cup countdown, page 26

CRICKET: ENGLAND v WEST INDIES

## Fraser to force pace on right side of line

Angus Fraser missed the party in Montego Bay. Now the big Middlesex bowler is in the mood to pop a few corks of his own against West Indies A in tomorrow's match. David Field reports from Kingston, Jamaica.

Angus Fraser did have the chance to share in the fun as Dean Headley, Andy Caddick and Phil Tufnell collected the wickets in England's innings eclipse of Jamaica at Jarrett Park on Sunday.

England's old warhorse watched most of the proceedings from the boundary edge virtually in the old-fashioned long-stop position, backing up the wicketkeeper, Jack Russell, who

was having a tough time coping with deliveries which shot through on the deck.

Fraser hardly broke sweat. He delivered only seven overs in the match and those were from the opposite end to where Headley and Caddick were causing havoc on the atrocious pitch. He ideally wanted 60 to 70 overs before the first Test at Sabina Park in eight days' time.

"I'd be lying if I said those seven overs in the match were the best I'd bowled in my life. But I'm not unduly worried about it - I'd just like to join in. I now want a good bowl and to get some wickets so that I can come off feeling as though I've contributed and not just watched it all."

Fraser, like the rest of the bowlers, is acutely aware that England must cut down their no-ball tally. They overstepped 31 times against Jamaica and, in the Caribbean heat, cannot afford to be howling seven and eight-ball overs.

"We've got to work at it to try and eliminate it in the next week or so," Fraser said. "Imagine getting Brian Lara out cheaply only for it to be called a no-ball and then he goes on to get a big score. That would be criminal."

"We've got to make sure we keep our front feet behind the line. It's something we are aware of. We have been howling in practice and that wasn't an acceptable level of no-halls in Montego Bay."

"When you get bowlers running in a full gait trying to propel a cricket ball as fast as they can, you're not going to get it right all the time. Olympic triple-jumpers don't always get it right."

• The Guyana Cricket Board is pressing on with ticket sales for the third Test scheduled to start between the West Indies and England next month, despite political instability and street disturbances in the area.

## Ambrose in Test squad after refuting retirement rumours

Curly Ambrose may not be in the best form of his long career as a fast bowler, and there have been rumours of his imminent retirement, but he was named yesterday in West Indies' squad for the first Test against England.

He denied reports yesterday that he had prepared a letter of retirement, insisting he was available for the five Test series, which starts at Sabina Park, in Kingston, Jamaica, next week.

"I'm not done yet and only Curly Ambrose knows when to call it quits. I still have something to offer to West Indies cricket," Ambrose said in a radio interview. He described reports of his retirement as "just a vicious rumour", adding that they had sparked a number of calls from all over the world.

The 34-year-old Antiguan, who has been the spearhead of

the West Indies attack since he came into the team in 1988, has taken 307 wickets - 117 against England - in 74 Tests, putting him within two victims of Lance Gibbs, the third most successful West Indies bowler.

However, he took only one wicket in 44 overs in the two Tests he played during the recent 3-0 drubbing in Pakistan.

He sustained a shoulder injury, did not play in the Champions' Trophy one-day series in Sharjah before Christmas, and has been below his best for the Leeward Islands this season.

His position is now threatened by younger men, like Franklyn Rose and Mervyn Dillon, both of whom are in the West Indies squad announced yesterday.

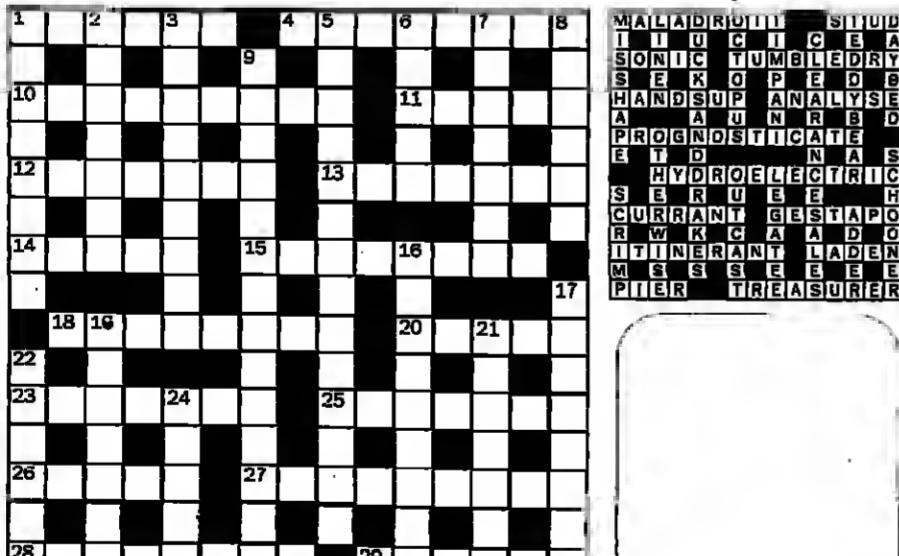
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## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3513, Wednesday 21 January

By Aquila

Tuesday's Solution



ACROSS  
1 Insect making place tense? (6)  
4 First-class not out position (8)  
10 Johnny's position when the stars come out? (5-4)  
11 Lead removed from Maxim, the dog (5)  
12 Rarebit cooked for a judge (7)  
13 Nothing changes in plant's carpel regions (7)  
14 Young of a particular vanessid (5)  
15 Fixed salary prevents boss from moving (3-5)  
18 Reserve school sent back a sum of money (8)

20 Regal drunk gets another drink (5)  
23 Knocked clear in performance? (7)  
25 Make allowance for study completed (7)  
26 Break below joint (5)  
27 See chintz design of philosopher? (9)  
28 Concerned about that place in cove (8)  
29 Train guard (6)  
DOWN  
1 Half-life established, that can be tabulated (8)  
2 Scrabble left in bank on high street? (7)  
3 Flatter kind, say (5-4)  
5 Warden's variety-act booked by James? (4,2,3,5)  
6 Opera standard reduced (5)  
7 Bill ready to sing, presumably? (7)  
8 Showy ornament bears no name (6)  
9 Writing prose, concerned with new style (14)  
16 Somehow, loose zinc settles (9)  
17 Most compressed cheese goes to gala in Germany (8)  
19 Nimble sort of a feline about to steal (7)  
21 Marksman, say, love beef as starter? (7)  
22 Braved stoically, for example (6)  
24 Divine wife in unpleasant experience (5)

Tim Henman called it his "worst performance ever" and there were few arguing with him after watching the five-set loss to France's Jerome Gilnard in the first round of the Australian Open yesterday.

Henman, who beat the world No 2, Pat Rafter, in Sydney last week, succumbed to the French qualifier - ranked outside the top 100 - despite his opponent having to call for the trainer to have blisters on both of his feet hurt. The defeat ruled out the prospect of an all-British quarter-final match with Greg Rusedski, who comfortably progressed in the second round with a straight-sets victory over the American David Witten.

"For someone of my ability, there is no way I can let that happen," admitted Henman, after making his exit 3-6, 7-6, 2-6, 6-3, 9-11. "To come out and put in a performance like that just isn't acceptable. If I am going to be any good at this game, there's no way I can play like that."

Henman, so impressive in defeating Rafter, showed the other side of his tennis character that is frustrating his efforts to emerge as truly world-class. "I can't explain it," he said. "I have to go away and regroup."

After an awful start, Henman somehow managed to take the match - that lasted four

hours 19 minutes - into a deciding set against a player he had beaten in straight sets at Wimbledon last year.

Stark came through against Carlos Costa, when the Spaniard was forced to retire because of a muscle problem. The return match on Thursday will have an added edge with Stark now being guided by Brian Teacher, the coach Rusedski dropped soon after he reached the US Open final last year.

Austria's Thomas Muster was another of the men's seeds to fall as he lost in straight sets to Sweden's Jan Apell while Andre Agassi beat the Italian Marzio Martelli in four.

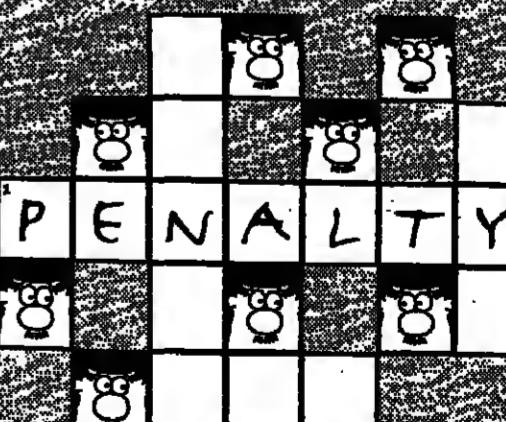
Jeff Tarango made a highly volatile exit as he shouted disagreements with the English umpire, Mike Morrissey, in his match against Australia's Rafter. The American, who was banned from Wimbledon for a year after an outburst in 1995, held up two fingers and shouted at the umpire: "That's two [line calls] you owe me, and you know it." He eventually lost 7-6, 7-6, 6-7, 7-5.

Rusedski, the No 5 seed, needed to save two set points in his opening set, but encountered few other problems as he sent down 27 aces against Witt, ranked 208, to win 7-6, 6-3, 6-4. Rusedski's next opponent will be another American, Jonathan Stark, against whom he had to come back from two sets down

to beat 11-9 in the final set at Wimbledon last year.

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1a. Could be incurred if we don't receive your completed tax return by 31st January



After this deadline, you face a £100 penalty.

Remember, 31 January means

31 January. If you need help, contact your tax office during office hours, or call

the Self Assessment Helpline on 0845 800 444.

Revenue

Spitting spat signals end for Milosevic's stay at Villa

Aston Villa have punished Sava Milosevic for spitting in the direction of his own fans on Saturday by putting him on the transfer list.

Following mounting pressure from supporters, Brian Little, the Villa manager, discussed the incident which happened during the match at Blackburn with club chairman Doug Ellis after watching video evidence.

Little said: "The player regrets his actions which are not acceptable to this club. He has been placed on the transfer list with immediate effect and we will now get on with the job of concentrating on Saturday's FA Cup tie with West Bromwich Albion."

Little must now decide whether to include Milosevic for that match or try and replace him quickly, as the deadline for new signings for their UEFA Cup tie in March is 31 January. Villa meet Atletico Madrid in the quarter-final and the sale of Milosevic would leave Little with just Stan Collymore and Dwight Yorke, who is still not completely fit, as his main attacking options.

Fausto Asprilla has completed his transfer back to Parma, signing a three-and-a-half year deal with the Italian club for a fee of around £6m. Newcastle paid £7.5m for the Colombian when he moved from Parma to Tyneside two years ago.

One Parma player who may be moving to England is left-back Antonio Benarro, who was watched by Roy Hodgson, the Blackburn Rovers manager, at the weekend. Hodgson is understood to be keen to re-sign the deal quickly.

Tony Adams, the Arsenal captain, came through his first match for a month yesterday and looks set to return to action against the Gunners' FA Cup tie against Middlesbrough on Saturday.

The England defender, who made a convincing return in Arsenal reserves' 1-0 victory over Chelsea, said: "There's no pain. I feel great. It was important to get 90 minutes under my belt and also to get in a few tackles."

Paul Williams has been given a one-match suspension by the Football Association for his dismissal in Saturday's Premiership match with Arsenal at Highfield Road. In his report, referee Steve Lodge called the challenge on Dennis Bergkamp "serious foul play", but said it was in the category of "denying a goal-scoring opportunity", which carries just a one-game ban.

- Catherine Riley



Tim Henman berates himself during his first-round loss in Melbourne yesterday

Photograph: Ken Irwin/AFP

## TENNIS: AUSTRALIAN OPEN

## Henman heads home after 'worst performance ever'

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Martina Hingis, breezed through her first-round match for the loss of just three games against Wiltz Probst, but there was no such joy for Helena Sukova, who announced her retirement after losing to Anne Miller 4-6, 7-5, 6-0.

- Derrick Whyte, Melbourne.

Results, Digest, page 27